Abstract

This review offers a theoretical and practical guide to assessing a broad range of personality differences in middle childhood and adolescence. We begin by highlighting normative changes in middle childhood and adolescence that shape the personality differences youth display. We then review the assessment of four broad domains of personality in children and adolescents: temperament and personality traits, social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) skills, motivation and agency (including goals, values, and interests), and narrative identity. We conclude by offering a primer of general principles for assessing personality in childhood and adolescence: pursuing ongoing construct validation, weighing strengths and weaknesses of various informants and data sources, combining measures, addressing heterotypic continuity, obtaining child self-reports, and pursuing promising new directions. It is well worth taking on the challenges inherent in assessing these individual differences because children and adolescents display a rich, complex, and meaningful set of still-changing personality differences that shape the course of their lives.
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1. INTRODUCTION

By middle childhood, children display a rich range of personality characteristics. One child—let us call her Anne (with an “e”)—may be outgoing, curious, empathic, and easily stressed; have difficulty regulating her emotions in charged situations; and strive for academic achievement (Montgomery 1976). Another child—let us call him Harry—may be fiercely loyal to his friends, brave, and bold, even in dangerous situations, but have a hard time controlling his temper (Rowling 1999). Youth display an even greater variety of personality characteristics by adolescence when they begin to explore their identities and craft their emerging life narratives. Youth’s personality differences have implications for their success at important life tasks and their mental health (De Fruyt et al. 2017, De Fruyt & Karevold 2021, Hill et al. 2019, Kushner 2015, Roberts et al. 2007), and their personalities change at both individual and mean levels over time (Shiner 2021, Soto & Tackett 2015), making personality an important potential target for prevention and intervention efforts (see the sidebar titled Personality Does Change in Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood). To study and address personality differences in children and adolescents, reliable and valid assessment is key.

This review offers a theoretical and practical guide to assessing a broad range of personality differences in middle childhood and adolescence. Our broad perspective on personality draws from McAdams’ model of personality development (McAdams 2013, 2015), which describes three overarching domains of personality and their emergence in the first two decades of life. In this model, young children are seen as actors on their life stage who are already displaying temperamental tendencies to think, feel, and behave in somewhat consistent ways across situations and time in early childhood. These earliest temperamental tendencies become elaborated over time and take the form of the Big Five personality traits. By middle childhood, children become motivated agents who actively shape their lives as they pursue meaningful goals, articulate their values, and explore their interests. Finally, later in adolescence, youth start to become authors who develop life narratives that weave together stories linking their past with their present and their imagined futures.

We begin by highlighting recent research on normative changes in middle childhood and adolescence that shape the personality differences young people display. We then review the assessment of four broad domains of personality in children and adolescents: temperament and

PERSONALITY DOES CHANGE IN CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE, AND ADULTHOOD

Sometimes researchers, practitioners, and laypeople alike claim that personality is highly stable and therefore unworthy as a topic for developmental research or a target for intervention. However, research over the past two decades has demonstrated convincingly that personality—in all of the domains covered in this review—changes throughout childhood and adolescence and that such changes continue well into adulthood (McAdams et al. 2019). Change includes at least two key types: rank-order change, or changes in the relative ordering of individuals on a personality difference (indexed by correlations across time), and mean-level change, or changes in the average level of a personality characteristic as individuals get older (Caspi et al. 2005). Temperament and personality traits, for example, show moderate rank-order stability by preschool age but still manifest substantial rank-order change in adulthood, and they change in their mean levels in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as well (Soto & Tackett 2015). Interventions may further facilitate personality change in childhood and adolescence (Kautz et al. 2014). Personality differences are both stable enough to be meaningful and changeable enough to be worthy of developmental study or intervention.
personality traits, social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) skills, motivation and agency (including goals, values, and interests), and narrative identity. We conclude by offering a primer of general principles for assessing personality in childhood and adolescence, including suggestions for new directions in youth personality assessment.

1.1. Normative Developmental Changes in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

As children and adolescents develop, they display an increasingly broad and differentiated range of individual differences. Normative biological, cognitive, socioemotional, and environmental changes affect the personality differences that youth manifest at each age, as well as the methods needed for assessment.

Middle childhood is a period of substantial growth and change. Researchers have recognized for decades that, at the start of middle childhood, children undergo a transition termed the “age 5- to 7-year shift” (White 1965). During this transition, children experience biological changes, including the start of cortical maturation and reorganization, increased sexual differentiation in brain pathways, and greater brain plasticity (Campbell 2011). These biological changes are accompanied by cognitive changes: greater skill in reasoning and problem solving, stronger capacities for adopting multiple perspectives, growth in attention and working memory, and greater ability to think about the future (Del Giudice 2014). By around age 8, children develop a better understanding of their own traits, interests, and abilities and are able to use that information to evaluate and reflect on their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, including in comparison with others (Davis-Kean et al. 2009). Children become a more critical part of their societies during middle childhood, and their social contexts broaden. Ethnographic work has revealed that, across societies, it is during middle childhood that adults begin to focus on deliberately teaching children the norms and roles within their cultures, including the foundational skills necessary for work and relationships in adulthood (Lancy & Grove 2011). In most contemporary cultures, children enter formal schooling and are evaluated with more stringent standards. Children begin to spend more time with peers, and these peer interactions profoundly shape children’s self-views (Rubin et al. 2015).

Normative change is even more visible and pervasive in adolescence, a period that begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the achievement of adulthood, though the markers of adulthood are debated (Steinberg 2016). A cascade of biological changes takes place, including the release of hormones, structural and functional changes in the brain, greater brain plasticity, metabolic changes, and alterations in circadian rhythm (Dahl et al. 2018). These biological changes are associated with a host of cognitive and emotional-motivational changes, including greater capacities for abstract thinking and perspective taking, heightened reward and sensation seeking, a stronger orientation toward peers and social status, and exploration of romantic and sexual interests (Dahl et al. 2018). Growth in these self- and other-oriented domains motivates adolescents to explore their identities, their life goals and commitments, and the ways that they can contribute to society, and young people develop increasingly complex and differentiated views of themselves (Crone & Fuligni 2020). Across societies, adolescents attain greater autonomy as their environments become more peer-oriented; their social networks expand, and they explore a greater breadth of environments, although relationships with parents remain vitally important (Dahl et al. 2018).

1.2. Implications of Normative Development for Personality Assessment in Middle Childhood and Adolescence

These normative changes in middle childhood and adolescence have implications for the personality differences that can be assessed in youth. First, because of children’s increasing cognitive and socioemotional capacities during middle childhood, the personality traits that school-age children
display are broader than those seen earlier in childhood. These include individual differences in how they view themselves relative to others (e.g., their sense of being liked and accepted); their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors involving the future (e.g., worries about the future, capacities for planning and persevering over time, responsibility toward others); and their intellectual curiosity and interests. Second, because of the centrality of academics and peers in middle childhood and adolescence, some of the most important personality differences involve youth's behaviors and goals in the context of academic work (e.g., carefulness in schoolwork, motivation for academic achievement) and peer relationships (e.g., sociability, motivation for social status). Third, school-age children display new personality differences that reflect their emerging capacities for agency (McAdams 2013). Because school-age children become better able to imagine the future, develop greater independence, and work on adopting the norms and roles of their societies, they develop their own goals, values, and interests. Fourth and finally, individual differences in identity and narrative development become a key aspect of personality in adolescence as young people become capable of more complex reflection about themselves and their lives. We now turn to the topic of how best to assess this breadth of personality differences in young people.

2. ASSESSMENT OF TEMPERAMENT AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

2.1. The Nature of Temperament and Personality Traits: More Alike Than Different

Individual differences in the behavior of children and adolescents are most often conceptualized and assessed in terms of traits: characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that tend to be relatively consistent over time and across relevant situations (Allport 1937). Traditionally, personality and developmental psychologists have distinguished between two classes of traits: temperament and personality. Temperament is typically defined as including traits that appear early in life (e.g., during the first year or two) and have a stronger biological basis (Shiner et al. 2012). Temperament traits are often organized into three broad domains: Surgency, Negative Affectivity, and Effortful Control (Rothbart et al. 2001). In contrast, personality traits incorporate a broader range of characteristics that gradually unfold across childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Shiner & Caspi 2012). These characteristics are most commonly structured in terms of the Big Five trait domains: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (John et al. 2008).

It has become increasingly clear that temperament versus personality is a distinction without much of a difference (Shiner & De Young 2013, Soto & Tackett 2015). For example, there is close correspondence between major temperament and personality trait domains: temperamental Surgency corresponds with Big Five Extraversion, Negative Affectivity with Neuroticism, and Effortful Control with Conscientiousness (De Pauw et al. 2009, Tackett et al. 2013). Both temperament and personality traits are structured hierarchically, with broad domains that each subsume a number of more-specific facets (Rothbart et al. 2001, Soto & John 2017). Childhood analogs of the Big Five can be observed by early childhood (De Pauw et al. 2009, Soto & John 2014), and temperament traits can still be seen in adults (Evans & Rothbart 2007). Both temperament and personality traits are influenced by people’s genetic and neurobiological makeup, as well as their environments and experiences, and heritability estimates are very similar between different temperament and personality traits (Polderman et al. 2015, Vukasovic & Bratko 2015).

It is important to note that, although temperament and personality traits appear to reflect similar basic traits with similar structure and sources, measures of the two kinds of traits do not assess entirely commensurate sets of tendencies (De Pauw 2017). Temperament and personality traits may differ in terms of their predictive validity for youth’s life outcomes. Temperament measures
often focus more on basic emotional and behavioral processes, whereas personality measures include more items assessing youth's social behavior and typical styles of thinking about their experiences (Shiner & De Young 2013). As a result, researchers need to carefully consider the content of specific measures before deciding whether to assess temperament or personality traits.

Reflecting the similarities across the two trait domains, we review measures of temperament and personality traits together. Table 1 lists prominent trait measures that are often used to assess children and adolescents. This table highlights important similarities and differences between specific measures as well as broader conceptual and practical issues. These issues include assessment of broad trait domains, assessment of lower-level facet traits, and assessment during different developmental periods and using different rating perspectives (e.g., self-report, parent report, observer report).

### Table 1 Prominent questionnaire measures of personality and temperament traits in childhood and adolescence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Trait domains</th>
<th>Number of facets</th>
<th>Developmental periods</th>
<th>Informant perspective&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality questionnaires</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical Personality Inventory for Children (Mervielde &amp; De Fruyt 2002)</td>
<td>Big Five</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Early childhood to early adolescence</td>
<td>Parent (self)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory of Child Individual Differences (Halverson et al. 2003)</td>
<td>Big Five</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Early childhood to early adolescence</td>
<td>Parent (self)</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Five Inventory–2 (Soto &amp; John 2017)</td>
<td>Big Five</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Early adolescence to adulthood</td>
<td>Self (peer, parent)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEO Personality Inventory–3 (McCrae et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Big Five</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Adolescence to adulthood</td>
<td>Self (peer)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Temperament questionnaires** |
| EAS Temperament Survey (Buss & Plomin 1984) | Emotionality, Activity, Sociability, Shyness | None | Infancy to early childhood | Parent | 20 |

| **Rothbart temperament questionnaires** |
| Infant Behavior Questionnaire–Revised (Gartstein & Rothbart 2003) | Surgency, Negative Affectivity, Orienting/Regulation | 14 | Infancy | Parent | 191 |
| Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire (Putnam et al. 2006) | Surgency, Negative Affectivity, Effortful Control | 18 | Early childhood | Parent | 201 |
| Children's Behavior Questionnaire (Rothbart et al. 2001) | Surgency, Negative Affectivity, Effortful Control | 15 | Early to middle childhood | Parent | 195 |
| Temperament in Middle Children Questionnaire (Simonds 2006) | Surgency, Negative Affectivity, Effortful Control, Sociability/Affiliation | 17 | Middle childhood | Parent | 157 |
| Early Adolescent Temperament Questionnaire–Revised (Ellis 2002) | Surgency, Negative Affectivity, Effortful Control, Affiliation | 12 | Middle childhood to early adolescence | Self (parent) | 65 |
| Adult Temperament Questionnaire (Evans & Rothbart 2007) | Extraversion, Negative Affectivity, Effortful Control, Affiliation, Orienting Sensitivity | 18 | Adulthood | Self | 177 |

<sup>a</sup>Informants used to develop each measure are listed outside of parentheses. Alternative informants are listed in parentheses.
2.2. Assessment of Broad Trait Domains

Both youth and adult personality traits are most commonly assessed in terms of the Big Five domains. Extraversion can be defined as the extent to which a person is sociable, assertive, and energetic, as opposed to being more socially and emotionally reserved. Agreeableness refers to how much compassion, respect, and trust someone feels toward other people, as opposed to being self-centered, argumentative, and suspicious of others. Conscientiousness is the extent to which someone prefers organization and order, stays focused on tasks, and meets responsibilities, as opposed to being more disorganized and lackadaisical. Neuroticism represents how prone someone is to experience negative emotions, such as fear, sadness, and anger. Finally, Openness to Experience is the extent to which someone prefers new and complex ideas and experiences, as opposed to familiar and conventional ones. As shown in Table 1, a number of questionnaire inventories can be used to assess the Big Five in childhood and adolescence, including the Hierarchical Personality Inventory for Children (HiPIC) (Mervielde & De Fruyt 2002), the Inventory of Child Individual Differences (ICID) (Halverson et al. 2003), the Big Five Inventory–2 (BFI-2) (Soto & John 2017), and the NEO Personality Inventory–3 (NEO-PI-3) (McCrae et al. 2005).

Many temperament measures can be conceptualized as assessing a subset of the Big Five domains that are especially prominent during childhood. For example, the temperament questionnaires developed by Mary Rothbart and colleagues (Ellis 2002, Evans & Rothbart 2007, Garthstein & Rothbart 2003, Putnam et al. 2006, Rothbart et al. 2001, Simonds 2006) comprise the domains of Surgency, Negative Affectivity, and Effortful Control, which represent childhood analogs of Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness, respectively (De Pauw et al. 2009, Tackett et al. 2013). An alternative temperament measure, the Emotional Activity Sociability (EAS) Temperament Survey (Buss & Plomin 1984), assesses emotionality, activity, shyness, and sociability. EAS emotionality corresponds closely with Big Five Neuroticism, whereas activity, shyness, and sociability can be conceptualized as facets of Extraversion that are closely related in adulthood but may be more distinct and prominent in childhood (De Pauw et al. 2009, Soto & John 2014).

2.3. Assessment of More-Specific Facet Traits

Both temperament and personality trait domains can be conceptualized hierarchically, with each broad domain subsuming several more-specific facets. These facet-level traits are related to each other but still distinguishable such that they each provide some unique behavioral information (Costa & McCrae 1995, Soto & John 2017, Paunonen & Ashton 2001). Most inventory measures listed in Table 1 assess traits at both the domain and facet levels. However, there is considerable variability in the number of facets assessed as well as the specific content of these facets. In part, these between-measure differences may reflect heterotypic continuity, the phenomenon that broad traits can be expressed through different specific behaviors during different developmental periods (Caspi & Roberts 2001, Putnam et al. 2008). However, these differences also reflect the fact that there is not yet consensus about the most important facets within each trait domain. The structure and assessment of facet-level traits remain important topics for future research, and researchers and practitioners should consider the facets assessed when picking a trait measure.

2.4. Trait Assessment Across Developmental Periods and Informant Perspectives

The task of assessing temperament or personality traits using a questionnaire inventory is necessarily different when the person being assessed is a preschooler versus an adolescent. The inventories listed in Table 1 differ in terms of the developmental periods and rating perspectives used.
to develop them. The EAS Temperament Survey was initially designed to assess traits during early childhood, the HiPIC and ICID to assess traits during early and middle childhood, and the BFI-2 and NEO-PI-3 to assess adolescents and adults. The Rothbart temperament questionnaires are distinctive in that they include different questionnaires targeting different developmental periods from infancy to adulthood. They therefore have the advantage of ensuring developmental appropriateness at each age but the disadvantage that trait scores are not directly comparable across developmental periods. As for informant perspective, the temperament questionnaires, HiPIC, and ICID were initially developed and validated using a parent-report format, whereas the BFI-2 and NEO-PI-3 were primarily developed using self-reports.

To some extent, questionnaire measures can be administered beyond their originally intended developmental periods and informant perspectives (e.g., De Fruyt et al. 2000, Soto et al. 2017). However, there are limits to this flexibility. For example, late middle childhood appears to be the lower bound for obtaining psychometrically sound self-reports on most trait measures (Allik et al. 2004, Capaldi & Rothbart 1992, De Fruyt et al. 2000, Soto et al. 2008). Moreover, using an inventory whose content focuses on one developmental period to describe youth during another period carries the risk that some meaning will be lost in developmental translation. We return to this topic in our discussion of general principles.

2.5. Alternatives to the Questionnaire Approach

Several innovative assessment approaches have been pioneered as alternatives to Big Five questionnaire measures. For example, the common-language California Child Q-Set (CCQ) (Caspi et al. 1992) is designed to minimize individual differences in response style. Although the CCQ items are descriptive statements similar to those of a standard trait inventory, they are administered in a Q-sort format: Respondents are instructed to sort the set of 100 CCQ items into a fixed distribution from those most descriptive to least descriptive of the target child. The CCQ items can then be analyzed individually or scored in terms of the Little Six traits: the Big Five plus an Energy Level trait that is especially prominent during childhood (Soto 2016, Soto & John 2014).

Another creative twist on the inventory format is the Berkeley Puppet Interview (BPI) (Measelle et al. 1998). Each BPI item is a pair of contrasting statements that are administered in an interview format using two puppets. One puppet says a statement (e.g., “I’m shy when I meet new people”), the second puppet says the contrasting statement (“I’m not shy when I meet new people”), and then both puppets invite the child to respond (“How about you?”). Children’s open-ended responses are coded to reflect the direction and strength of their agreement with the two statements. The BPI can be used to obtain self-reports of the Big Five during early childhood (Measelle et al. 2005).

Rather than asking children or observers to rate youth’s traits, researchers and practitioners can directly observe youth’s behavior. For example, in the thin-slice protocol (Tackett et al. 2016), children are recorded while completing a series of behavioral tasks (e.g., pretend to introduce yourself to another child, take turns removing blocks from a tower, sing your favorite song). Observers then rate each child’s traits on the basis of their behavior during the tasks. The thin-slice procedure can be used to generate ratings of the Big Five that reliably converge with parent-reported personality, strengths, and behavioral problems (Tackett et al. 2016, 2019).

These alternatives to the questionnaire approach also have limitations. For example, they are generally time intensive to administer and labor intensive to score. Moreover, their psychometric properties are less well understood than those of questionnaire inventories. However, they offer innovative ways to elicit trait-relevant information.
2.6. Summary
Researchers and practitioners have a number of options for assessing the temperament and personality traits of children and adolescents (see Table 1). These options reflect several points of emerging consensus: that temperament and personality are similar constructs but that their content does not entirely overlap, that childhood analogs of the Big Five can be measured by the early school years, and that more-specific facets can be distinguished within each broad trait domain. However, they also highlight some consequential choices: which trait domains and facets to assess; whether to rely on youth’s self-reports, parent reports, or another data source; and whether to use a standard questionnaire inventory or an alternative approach.

3. SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL SKILLS IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

3.1. What Are Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills, and Why Are They Important?
Over the past two decades, psychologists, policymakers, educators, and economists alike have argued for the importance of SEB skills for youth’s successful development. These skills involve children’s and adolescents’ abilities to maintain social relationships, regulate emotions, and manage goal- and learning-directed behaviors (Soto et al. 2021a).

The economist James Heckman called attention to the importance of what he called “noncognitive skills” in education. Heckman and colleagues (2010) reanalyzed data collected in the High-Scope Perry Preschool Program Longitudinal Study (Nores et al. 2005, Schweinhart et al. 2005). They found that participants assigned to a preschool intervention were more successful than a control group on a variety of SEB outcomes, despite negligible long-term effects on cognitive ability. These findings underscore the importance of SEB skills and have led to calls for students to develop these skills (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez 2019). Such skills should enable young people to deal with challenges and disruptions to the labor market and future societies. From this perspective, educational curricula should not only teach academic content knowledge but also explicitly teach youth SEB skills.

The concept of SEB skills has gained further attention due to their potential malleability. Meta-analyses of skill-focused interventions have found that they typically produce medium-sized gains in SEB skill development, which persist over time and lead to subsequent gains in student outcomes (Durlak et al. 2011, Taylor et al. 2017). This increased attention on SEB skills has helped connect the fields of child and adolescent personality with education, encouraging the fields to think about the joint development of abilities, personality traits, attitudes, mindsets, and interests in young people.

Despite widespread consensus about the importance of SEB skills, the conceptualization of skills remains contested. De Fruyt and colleagues (2015) and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (John & De Fruyt 2015, Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez 2019) define SEB skills as “individual characteristics that: (a) originate in the reciprocal interaction between biological predispositions and environmental factors, (b) are manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors, (c) continue to develop through formal and informal learning experiences, and (d) influence important socio-economic outcomes throughout the individual’s life” (De Fruyt et al. 2015, p. 279). This definition is broad enough to include personality traits but underscores the malleability—rather than consistency—of individual differences in behavior. By contrast, other scholars explicitly distinguish SEB skills from personality traits. For example, Soto and colleagues (2021a) argue that skills reflect how well a person can enact a
particular behavior when the situation calls for it, whereas personality traits reflect how frequently a person tends to enact the behavior, averaged across situations.

Although different models have proposed divergent sets of skills, ranging in number from a few to more than a hundred (John & De Fruyt 2015, Kankaraš 2017, Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez 2019, Soto et al. 2021a), there is emerging consensus that these skills can be grouped into five domains: engaging with others/social engagement, collaboration/cooperation, task performance/self-management, emotion regulation/emotional resilience, and open-mindedness/innovation (Abrahams et al. 2019, John & De Fruyt 2015, Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez 2019, Soto et al. 2021a). Table 2 presents measures used to assess five prominent SEB skill models. As shown in the column listing the domains covered in each model, these SEB skill domains largely parallel the conceptual space defined by the Big Five personality traits, reflecting the domains of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness.

3.2. Questionnaire Assessment of Social-Emotional-Behavioral Skills

Table 2 also summarizes the key characteristics of the five questionnaire measures designed to operationalize the prominent SEB skills models. These questionnaires differ from each other in several ways (Abrahams et al. 2019, Soto et al. 2021a): a focus on typical versus optimal performance, the breadth of domains covered, and facets included.

As noted above, some scholars define SEB skills with a focus on how individuals tend to behave, averaged across situations, while others focus on how individuals are capable of behaving when the situation calls for it. Reflecting these alternative conceptualizations, the measures listed in Table 2 operationalize skills in two different ways or in a hybrid of different ways. The OECD Social and Emotional Skills Instrument (Kankaraš & Suarez-Alvarez 2019) and the Tripartite Taxonomy of Character (TTC) (Park et al. 2017) resemble trait inventories in that their items are descriptive statements, and respondents rate how accurately each item characterizes their typical pattern of behavior. In contrast, the Social and Emotional Competency Assessment (SECA) (Davidson et al. 2018) and the Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI) (Soto et al. 2021b) adopt a format in which each item describes a particular skill, and respondents rate how capably they can perform that skill. Finally, the Social and Emotional Nationwide Assessment (SENA) (Prim et al. 2016, 2021) is a hybrid measure that systematically includes both trait-like and self-efficacy items to assess SEB skills.

3.3. Assessment of Skill Domains and Facets

A second way that SEB skill measures differ is their assessment of broad skill domains. The OECD, SENA, and BESSI inventories assess all five of the major skill domains that map roughly onto the Big Five. The TTC covers much of the same content, but it merges engaging with others/social engagement and collaboration/cooperation skills into a superordinate domain of interpersonal strengths. By contrast, the SECA adopts a somewhat narrower range of content. Specifically, it excludes open-mindedness/innovation skills so as to focus on SEB characteristics that are maximally distinct from cognitive ability.

These measures also differ in their assessment of more-specific skill facets (e.g., facets such as empathy, trust, and teamwork within the collaboration/cooperation domain). As shown in Table 2, the OECD, SENA, and BESSI inventories assess several skill facets within each domain, with a total of 15 to 32 facets across the five domains. By contrast, the SECA and TTC measures assess only 5 and 7 skill facets, respectively. Thus, researchers and practitioners interested in assessing skills at both the domain and facet levels should consider administering one of
Table 2  Prominent questionnaire measures of social-emotional-behavioral skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Construction background</th>
<th>Skill domains(^a)</th>
<th>Skill facets</th>
<th>Developmental periods</th>
<th>Informant perspective</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OECD Social-Emotional Skill Measure (OECD 2019)</td>
<td>Social-emotional skill literature review</td>
<td>Engaging with others (E), collaboration (A), task performance (C), emotion regulation (ES), open-mindedness (O)</td>
<td>15 facets under domains, achievement motivation, and general self-efficacy</td>
<td>Students 10–15 years</td>
<td>Self, parent, teacher</td>
<td>120 + 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional Competency Assessment (SECA) (Davidson et al. 2018)</td>
<td>Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework; cocreated with US students</td>
<td>Relationship skills (E), social awareness (A), self-management (C), self-awareness (ES + O), responsible decision-making skills (A + C)</td>
<td>2 self-awareness and 3 self-management facets</td>
<td>Elementary, middle, and high school students</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripartite Taxonomy of Character (TTC) (Park et al. 2017)</td>
<td>Character strengths framework; cocreated with US students and teachers</td>
<td>Interpersonal strengths (A), intrapersonal strengths (C), intellectual strengths (O + E)</td>
<td>3 interpersonal, 2 intrapersonal, and 2 intellectual facets</td>
<td>Elementary, middle, and high school students</td>
<td>Self, parent, teacher</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Emotional Nationwide Assessment (SENA) (Primi et al. 2016, 2021)</td>
<td>Social-emotional literature review; cocreated with Brazilian educators</td>
<td>Engaging with others (E), amity (A), self-management (C), emotion regulation (ES), open-mindedness (O)</td>
<td>17 identity/trait and 17 self-efficacy facets</td>
<td>Students 11–19 years</td>
<td>Self, parent, teacher</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI) (Soto et al. 2021b)</td>
<td>Personality framework</td>
<td>Social engagement (E), cooperation (A), self-management (C), emotional resilience (ES), innovation (O)</td>
<td>29 facets and 3 compounds (self-reflection, adaptability, capacity for independence)</td>
<td>High school students and adults</td>
<td>Self and observer</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Following each skill domain is the corresponding Big Five domain in parentheses. Abbreviations: A, Agreeableness; C, Conscientiousness; E, Extraversion; ES, Emotional Stability; O, Openness to Experience/Intellect.
the former three measures. If the length of these measures (which range from 120 to 192 items) is a concern, then they may choose to administer a subset of the facet scales.

3.4. Alternatives to Questionnaire Inventories

Beyond these questionnaire inventories, alternative measures of SEB skills are also available. The most prominent alternative approaches are task performance measures and situational judgment tests (SJT). Task performance measures present respondents with standardized situations or stimuli designed to elicit specific skills, such as creativity (Torrance 1966) or emotional intelligence (Mayer et al. 2003). By contrast, SJTs present hypothetical scenarios calling for particular skills, along with a list of possible responses, and then grade the effectiveness of individuals’ selected responses (e.g., MacCann & Roberts 2008). Even more so than skill inventories, task performance measures and SJTs operationalize SEB skills as capacities or abilities. However, the psychometric characteristics of these alternative approaches are generally less well established. Particular concerns include the low reliability of some task performance measures (Eisenberg et al. 2019, Enkavi et al. 2019) and the questionable discriminant validity of SJTs (McDaniel et al. 2016).

3.5. Summary

There is an emerging consensus that SEB skills include a wide range of capacities relevant for positive adaptation and that these capacities share a similar domain-level structure with the Big Five traits. Thus, future research can focus on further investigating the nature of skills: whether they can be empirically distinguished from personality traits and cognitive ability, how they typically develop across the life span, whether they are impacted by interventions, and their validity in predicting consequential outcomes. Considerable work is still needed on how these measures can best be used in the school context in a way that is valid, ethical, and practical (Duckworth & Yeager 2015). A researcher or practitioner selecting a skills measure should consider whether they wish to assess SEB skills as behavioral tendencies versus capacities, the importance of assessing broad skill domains versus more-specific facets, and the strengths and weaknesses of questionnaire inventories versus alternative approaches.

4. MOTIVATION AND AGENCY: GOALS, VALUES, AND INTERESTS

Beyond traits and SEB skills, children and adolescents vary on social-cognitive constructs that are narrower in scope and more situation-bound. As a result of the 5- to 7-year-shift, early in elementary school children begin to display new personality differences that reflect their emerging capacities for agency (McAdams 2013). Because of the large and varied sets of individual differences studied in the broad area of motivation, our review of this domain is of necessity selective. We describe briefly only a few such characteristics—goals, values, and interests—to offer a sense of the strengths and limitations of assessment in this domain of individual differences.

4.1. Goals: Achievement and Social Strivings

By early in elementary school, children vary in their self-directed goal striving. Goals involve pursuit of a particular object in the future, and they direct or guide behavior (Elliot & Fryer 2008). Because two central developmental tasks for children and adolescents are academic achievement and peer relationships (Masten et al. 1995), most goal research has focused on these two domains.
In the domain of academic achievement, two goals have been seen as central for youth: mastery focused on individual development and performance focused on social comparison and competition (Urdan & Kaplan 2020). A widely studied taxonomy differentiates these two goals on the basis of whether they are motivated by approach or avoidance concerns; thus, youth may pursue mastery-approach goals (learning and improvement), mastery-avoidance goals (pursuing perfection or avoiding losing one’s abilities), performance-approach goals (demonstrating one’s competence or trying to do better than others), and performance-avoidance goals (trying to avoid looking incompetent) (Sommet et al. 2021). Young people can provide self-reports on their goal orientations with the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (Midgley et al. 1998) or the Achievement Goal Questionnaire–Revised (Elliot & Muruyama 2008), for example. Youth’s goals for social relationships fall along similar dimensions: how much youth want to improve their social skills and relationships (mastery-approach), impress others with their popularity (performance-approach), and avoid feeling embarrassed or rejected (performance-avoidance) (Rodkin et al. 2013, Rudolph et al. 2011). In addition, youth vary in how much they pursue communal goals that are aimed at developing positive relationships with others and agentic goals focused on obtaining status and power (Ojanen et al. 2005).

A striking feature of the research on goals in youth is its productive use of brief self-report questionnaires (Urdan & Kaplan 2020). Brief self-report measures offer ease of data collection in the school context, and the widespread use of these measures has resulted in a rich and expansive literature on youth’s goal orientations from late elementary school through college (Sommet et al. 2021, Urdan & Kaplan 2020, Wigfield et al. 2021). For example, research on achievement motivation has addressed the development of individual differences in motivation in the broader family, school, and sociocultural contexts (Wigfield et al. 2015, 2021). The study of goals could build on its existing foundations by broadening both the methods of assessment and the goals being investigated. Parents, teachers, and peers may have insight into youth’s goals and could serve as alternative informants, particularly for younger elementary school–age children. Social vignette measures ask participants to imagine themselves in hypothetical scenarios and then to rate their goals in those scenarios; such measures may provide valid measures of goals, especially if children are asked to rate their goals in vignettes that involve imagining interactions with particular known peers (Lemerise et al. 2017). Finally, children and adolescents pursue goals that extend beyond those typically assessed, a point made clear when youth are asked open-ended questions about their motivations (Morsink et al. 2017, Urdan & Kaplan 2020).

4.2. Values

Values express a person’s key motivations and overarching goals (Döring et al. 2016); values are typically broader than goals, however, and reflect motivations that cut across life domains. By middle childhood, children have begun learning about the values of their families, cultural groups, and broader societies; they can express their own individual sense of values as well. Over the past decade, researchers have begun applying Schwartz’s (1992) circumplex model of universal values in adults and adolescents to the study of children. This model includes 10 values that appear across cultures: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. These values form a circular structure with two axes: one ranging from self-enhancement (concern for self) to self-transcendence (concern for others) and the other ranging from conservation (preservation of the status quo) to openness to change.

There are several measures available for assessing values in youth based on Schwartz’s model. One option is the Picture-Based Value Survey for Children (Döring et al. 2010); children see pictures and captions representing each of the values and then sort them by how important each
value is in their lives. In contrast, the Animated Values Instrument presents children with animated scenarios with visual, auditory, and written components (Collins et al. 2017); 21 subsets of five values are presented in sequence, and children pick the values that best and worst match their own within each set. These two picture-based measures can be administered to children by early middle childhood (Daniel et al. 2020). Children as young as 10 are able to complete modified versions of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz et al. 2001), a questionnaire measure developed for adults; the measure presents respondents with short verbal descriptions of the goals and motivations of gender-matched individuals, and respondents rate their similarity with that person. The creative development of youth measures has allowed research on values in children and adolescents to develop fairly rapidly.

4.3. Interests

Vocational interests are preferences for leisure, study, and work activities and environments in which persons can perform these activities (Wille & De Fruyt 2019). Interests are critically important because they shape a range of formal and informal choices that impact adolescents’ development and life course at a sensitive time when youth are exploring and consolidating their identities. Vocational interests affect consequential outcomes in the short and long term, and their impact on occupational outcomes is sometimes larger than that of cognitive abilities and personality traits (Rounds & Su 2014).

Although several models have been described in the literature (Nye & Rounds 2019), John Holland’s RIASEC model (Holland 1966, 1997) has been the predominant model for describing vocational interests since the 1970s. This model distinguishes among six domains of interests: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. These six domains have a hexagonal ordering of three opposite pairs (Realistic versus Social, Investigative versus Enterprising, Artistic versus Conventional) and are useful for describing the characteristics of both persons and environments. Recent extensions of Holland’s model have introduced subcomponents under the six main interest types (Wille et al. 2015) or restructured the interest domains into a hierarchical model, distinguishing additional interest domains (Su et al. 2019).

Interest inventories typically ask students to indicate their preferences for a series of activities or occupations that represent the RIASEC domains. There are numerous instruments assessing youth’s interests based on the RIASEC model, with some, such as the Inventory of Children’s Activities Revised (ICA-R) (Tracey 2002), specifically designed for use starting at the end of elementary school. Holland’s Self-Directed Search (Holland 1979, Holland & Messer 2017) is the most prominent measure used from ages 11 to 70. There is evidence that the RIASEC model’s hexagonal structure becomes more clearly established from childhood to late adolescence (Hartung et al. 2005). Interest inventories have successfully made their way into the practice of educational and counseling psychology by helping students explore their interests, skills, and strengths to make study and career path choices (Su 2020).

4.4. Summary

Youth vary in their achievement and social goals, values, and interests—all reflections of their emerging agency and self-direction—by middle childhood. More so than for temperament and personality traits, these domains tend to be assessed via youth’s self-reports. The reliance on relatively brief self-report inventories enables efficient data collection and highlights youth’s own perspectives on their internal motivations. Researchers less often study aspects of agency in the earlier part of middle childhood because children cannot complete existing questionnaire measures. Some youth may also lack insight into these aspects of their personalities. The use of
additional methods and informants to assess these constructs may add to the already-rich literature on motivation in children and adolescents.

5. NARRATIVE IDENTITY: ADOLESCENTS’ LIFE STORIES AS AN EMERGING ASPECT OF PERSONALITY

5.1. Adolescents’ Life Narratives as an Emerging Aspect of Personality

One of the key normative tasks that begins in adolescence is the development of identity (Erikson 1968), a process that continues into early adulthood. Adolescents gradually take a more independent position from their parents, exploring and making choices about identity-relevant issues (Klimstra et al. 2013). In addition, adolescents begin the process of developing a narrative identity: a life story that integrates one’s previous experiences with their goals, values, sense of meaning, and expected future into a more coherent whole (McAdams & McLean 2013). This integrative function helps young people begin to figure out who they are, how they came to be that person, what provides them with a sense of meaning, and who they imagine becoming in the future (McLean & Lilgendahl 2019); it also differentiates narrative identity from the other aspects of personality discussed here. Young people narrate their life stories in ways that vary greatly from one person to the next. For example, one person may tend to narrate their life using sequences where painful experiences are redeemed by positive endings, whereas another may typically tell of positive experiences that are contaminated by something negative (McLean et al. 2020). Younger children begin setting the foundation for their later narrative identity as they mutually narrate their experiences with their parents and other important people in their lives (Fivush et al. 2019). By adolescence, youth develop the capacity for autobiographical reasoning, meaning that they can use language to make connections from their past experience to their present sense of self and imagined future (Habermas & Reese 2015).

5.2. Assessment of Narrative Processing in Adolescents

Life narratives can be obtained through formats that vary along several dimensions (Adler et al. 2017). First, narratives may be gathered either through oral interviews or in a written format. Second, narratives may take a broad, life course perspective—by breaking various periods of life into chapters—or may focus only on particular life episodes. Third, directed prompts can be used to learn about specific types of experiences—for example, high or low points, turning points, self-defining experiences, traumas, or transgressions. Any combination of these formats and prompts is possible; however, because adolescents have fewer life experiences and do not yet have a full life story, most narrative research on adolescents obtains shorter oral or written narratives about particular episodes in youth’s lives rather than the whole life course.

Once narratives are obtained, they are coded on dimensions that reflect variations in how participants tell their life stories (Adler et al. 2017). Research on large samples of emerging and midlife adults suggests that these dimensions have a higher-order structure consisting of three main factors (McLean et al. 2020). First, motivational and affective themes reflect strivings toward communion (connections with others) and agency (mastery and achievement), overall emotional tone, and the presence of contamination and redemption sequences (positive situations turning bad and negative situations turning good, respectively). Second, autobiographical reasoning indicates differences in how much narrators explore, reflect, and create meaning out of experiences. Third, structure indicates the extent to which narrators provide clear information on time, context, and themes. The coding of life narratives enables researchers to conduct quantitative analyses, although narratives can also provide rich qualitative insights into the lived experiences of youth,
offering an idiographic perspective on individual young people that complements more nomothetic analyses.

6. A PRIMER ON PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: ISSUES TO CONSIDER AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Personality assessment in youth is particularly complex because younger children often cannot provide self-reports, so developmentalists need to rely on other means of assessment; in addition, personality itself is a moving target during childhood and adolescence. These challenges have forced people working with youth to be creative and deliberate in selecting their methods of measurement. In the following we address a range of issues in selecting assessment methods for youth, including trade-offs to consider.

6.1. Back to the Basics: Construct Validity in Youth Personality Assessment

Construct validation—the process of establishing the degree to which a measure assesses the construct it is intended to measure—is the foundation for research on personality in youth. We will be able to achieve a meaningful understanding of personality development in children and adolescents only if we work to establish the construct validity of our measures. Construct validation is a complex, ongoing process (Cronbach & Meehl 1955, Loewinger 1957), and it includes multiple phases (Flake et al. 2017, p. 371): substantive (construct conceptualization, item development, determination of content relevance and representativeness), structural (item analysis, factor analysis, reliability, measurement invariance), and external (convergent and discriminant, predictive/criterion, and group comparisons). There are significant problems in the rigor of construct validation for most of the child personality constructs described in this review. These problems include use of the same label to describe different constructs, lack of clarity regarding the basic structure of various constructs, poor representativeness of the content domain due to the use of very short scales, and lack of data on discriminant validity. We urge people assessing youth personality to pursue ongoing validation of the measures being used, particularly when adapted or used in new contexts or ages, and to pay careful attention to existing evidence of construct validity when selecting measures (Flake et al. 2017). Open science practices also call for greater transparency in the development, selection, and reporting of measures (Flake & Fried 2020).

6.2. Sources of Personality Data: Self-Report, Informant Report, and Behavioral Data

Personality assessment in children and adolescents typically involves data collected from one of three sources—self-report, informant report, or behavioral data—and each source has a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Self-report offers more intimate access to youth’s thoughts, feelings, and motivations but may be difficult to obtain from younger children or biased by self-enhancement processes and inaccurate social comparisons. Informants for youth typically include parents, teachers, or peers, each with their own distinct vantage point. Parents observe their offspring most often at home and can report on more rare or unguarded behaviors; however, they often have a more limited reference group for comparison. Teachers observe students at school and have a broader reference group, but they have more limited opportunities to observe each child, particularly in middle and high school, and may face difficulty reporting on less easily observed behaviors. Peers’ views can be obtained via inventories or peer nominations. Peers have many rich opportunities to observe the target in a number of contexts and are especially compelling as reporters on social
behavior and reputation, but they share the same developmental limitations as the self; moreover, schools are increasingly limiting opportunities for peer data collection (Marks 2017).

Self-reports and informant reports are most often obtained via questionnaire inventories. A well-designed inventory can be reliable, valid, efficient for collecting large amounts of data in a shorter period of time, and flexibly administered in both self-report and observer-report formats—all tremendous assets. However, questionnaires have limitations. Self-report questionnaires can be difficult for younger children to complete, a point we return to shortly. Moreover, both self-report and observer-report questionnaire responses can be biased by factors including social desirability, acquiescent response style (i.e., someone’s tendency to consistently agree or consistently disagree with items, regardless of their content), and use of more or less extreme response options (Cronbach 1950, Jackson & Messick 1958). Such biases may be especially prevalent in youth’s self-reports, because youth can have greater difficulty interpreting questionnaire items, less experience using multipoint response scales, and less clearly held self-views (Allik et al. 2004, Soto et al. 2008). The influence of these biases can be reduced—but not eliminated—by using scoring procedures that help correct for them or latent variable models that account for them as method factors (Aichholzer 2014, Soto & John 2017).

Behavioral data—involving direct observation and measurement of behaviors—are obtained through a variety of methods, including behavioral observations, experience sampling, wearable devices (such as cameras and pedometers), and laboratory tasks (Funder 2019). Younger children’s behavioral tendencies may be more easily and naturally observed than adults’, and both naturalistic and lab-based systems have been developed for behavioral observations (Goldsmith & Gagne 2012). Laboratory tasks are used to assess both traits and SEB skills, particularly children’s capacities for self-control and self-regulation (Robson et al. 2020). Behavioral data may appear more objective than questionnaire data, but their reality is more complex given that the measurement and interpretation of behavioral data require a series of subjective judgments (Funder 2019). Behavioral data are less efficient to obtain and may be harder to interpret because behavior is often determined by multiple tendencies.

6.3. Combining Multiple Sources of Personality Information

Child psychologists have recognized for decades that children’s behavior varies across contexts and that different informants have different insights; as a result, convergence between different informant reports is typically low-to-moderate in size (Achenbach et al. 1987, De Los Reyes et al. 2015). Agreement between questionnaire and behavioral task measures of the same construct is often particularly low (Dang et al. 2020, Wennerhold & Friese 2020). This may occur for a variety of reasons: Inventories may assess typical performance and tasks optimal performance, inventories may serve as trait measures and behavioral tasks as state measures, the reliability of some behavioral task measures may be low, and the two may assess different aspects of the construct (Dang et al. 2020, Wennerhold & Friese 2020).

These findings make it clear that relying on a single informant or measure to assess youth’s personalities limits progress; this is particularly a problem for literatures that are based almost entirely on personality measures obtained from the same, single informant. Multi-informant assessment improves the validity of personality measurement in youth and reduces overreliance on a single source for all constructs. Multiple informant reports can be combined in a variety of ways, including aggregating informants’ reports into a single score or focusing on shared variance across informants by using latent variable approaches (De Los Reyes et al. 2019). An underused but potentially valuable approach is the trait-score approach (Kraemer et al. 2003, Makol et al. 2020), which involves selecting three informants who vary systematically in the context (e.g., home and
school) and perspectives (e.g., self- and other report) from which they observe the target child; principal components or factor analysis is then used to extract a component—the trait score—on which the three informants’ reports all load strongly. The increased validity that likely comes from using multiple measures of youth’s personalities makes it well worth the challenges involved in combining those reports.


A particularly challenging aspect of youth personality assessment is the difficulty of obtaining self-reports from younger children. Younger children are limited in reading ability, may have difficulty understanding the concepts being assessed, and may lack insight into their own characteristics and standing relative to others. As noted earlier, children begin to develop a better sense of their own individual differences, particularly in comparison with others, following the 5- to 7-year shift (Davis-Kean et al. 2009). It is therefore typically easier to obtain self-reports of personality in children following this shift. However, there are two important caveats to this general pattern. First, although children appear to be able to provide self-reports after around age 8 on relatively short and straightforward measures, youth’s self-reports for more complex and multidimensional constructs—like the Big Five traits—may not be coherent and differentiated enough to yield a clear multidimensional structure until late middle childhood or early adolescence (Allik et al. 2004, Soto et al. 2008).

Second, children may be able to provide self-reports from ages 4 to 8 if the measure format is altered to be developmentally appropriate (Sabol et al. 2021), as we have reviewed here for the BPI and some values measures. Technology can be used to offer response options that younger children can understand, and measures can be adapted using pictures or multimedia presentations (Sabol et al. 2021). There is great value in developing new methods for assessing children’s early emerging ways of making meaning out of their personalities and contexts.

6.5. Addressing Heterotypic Continuity

Another particular challenge for developmental personality research is heterotypic continuity—a pattern where the outward manifestations of an underlying tendency change over time. For example, the trait domain of negative emotionality/neuroticism changes from early childhood through adolescence, broadening from mostly behavioral manifestations of negative emotions to include more cognitive manifestations as well (Shiner 2019). Heterotypic continuity implies that the content of a measure should be developmentally appropriate for the person being assessed; it would make little sense to ask whether a preschooler tends to complete their work assignments on time or whether an adult resists being cuddled by their caregiver. Addressing heterotypic continuity is crucial for maintaining construct validity in developmental research. There are three approaches to addressing heterotypic continuity: including all possible content across all ages, including only common content across all ages, and using only construct-valid content at each age (Petersen et al. 2020). Using construct-valid content has significant advantages over the other two options, and new methods of developmental scaling are being developed for addressing heterotypic continuity in this way (Peterson et al. 2020).

6.6. Future Directions: State Measurement, Cross-Cultural Assessment, and Race and Ethnicity

Several issues stand out as important for future work on child personality measurement beyond those we have already discussed. First, studies using state personality measures are relatively rare
in research on youth’s personalities. Yet state personality measurement is critical for obtaining a better understanding of the processes underlying personality differences and their development and the processes through which personality affects youth’s development (Baumert et al. 2017). Future work measuring personality states, rather than only personality traits, will benefit from the use of experience sampling, experimental designs, and task-based state measures. Second, cross-cultural research on personality development in youth has proved to be complex because people in different cultures interpret Likert scale response options in different ways (Abrahams et al. 2019). New methods, such as the use of anchoring vignettes to scale informants’ Likert ratings, are needed to be able to study personality development across cultures (Abrahams et al. 2019). Third and finally, there should be greater consideration of ways that race and ethnicity may shape the manifestation and measurement of personality in young people. A strong literature has emerged on racial and ethnic identity in youth over the past decade (Williams et al. 2012). However, race and ethnicity should be integrated more generally into the study of personality in children and adolescents.

7. CONCLUSION

Measurement of personality in children and adolescents is a complicated enterprise and requires careful consideration of construct validity, measurement source and type, methods of combining multiple sources of information, challenges of obtaining youth self-reports, and heterotypic continuity. However, the rich, complex, and meaningful variety of personality differences displayed by children and adolescents make it worthwhile and important to take on these assessment challenges.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

R.L.S. is not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review. C.J.S. is a copyright holder for the Big Five Inventory-2 (BFI-2) and the Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Skills Inventory (BESSI), which are discussed in this review. F.D.F. receives royalties for the Hierarchical Personality Inventory for Children (HiPIC), which is discussed in this review.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Preparation of this review was supported by the Charles A. Dana Professorship awarded to R.L.S.

LITERATURE CITED


Illustrates progress made possible using creative youth self-report measures; part of special issue of empirical articles on value development in youth.


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Errata

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