I decided to explore graphs from personality psychology theories, because I am taking a personality psychology course this term. This field is newer to me, as I am in social psychology, so I wanted to become better acquainted with these types of figures.

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated

This figure presenting Whole Trait Theory seems ineffective to me in several ways. For example, TraitDES and TraitEXP feel as if they could be integrated into the labels of the graphs directly, instead of being elaborated on in the figure’s note. Given the available space in the graph, writing out “the descriptive part of traits” on the graph feels feasible and requires less jumping around for a viewer of the figure. Additionally, the figure feels clumsy aesthetically, which makes it more difficult to understand. A primary example of this is the “links” arrows, where “links” is written in dark font on a dark-coloured arrow. It is easy to miss that these arrows, therefore, indicate links and not something else often indicated by arrows, such as time flow. A second example are the arrows leading from the output box to the frequency of state levels. These arrows all originate from slightly different places; it is unclear whether these are meant to refer to the entire “output” box, or if this is referring to the changes in manifestation of the Big 5 traits. Upon first glance and before reading the words, it seems as if they might be all pointing toward different concepts/words.

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated

This figure, like the figure before it, also presents some difficulties in interpreting because it does not use direct labelling and instead uses a legend. However, this legend feels somewhat unnecessary, given that there is not much repetition of the legend coding. For example, despite “affects” being represented by “Aff” and then having a legend explaining what the “Aff” node means, there is only one “Aff” node to begin with. Therefore, it is questionable why the author would not simply write “Affect” in the node; it is not a particularly long word, either. Another difficult-to-interpret features of this graph is the difference between a solid and dotted arrow. This explanation, instead of being available in a legend, is instead hidden in the middle of the figure’s note. Perhaps having a legend for this part of the graph instead of the nodes’ content would be more useful to the viewer. A final part of this graph that is unclear is its generalization; is this an example of how CAPS could be applied in a given situation, or do these general linkages (feature to encoding to affect to behavioural script to behaviour) always occur in this order? This is unclear, because the figure blends vague (e.g., “affect”) with semi-specific (e.g., “behaviour 2” labels.

A graph with lines and dots

Description automatically generated

Conversely, I found this graph much easier to interpret. It used direct labelling (i.e., putting Person B and Person A directly beside the lines that represented them) and I also liked that it used multiple things to distinguish the two lines: different shapes for each data point as well as different lines (solid versus dotted). There was clear differentiation between the two lines, which could have possibly been improved with colour; however, it was a black-and-white textbook. I also liked that the y-axis was condensed visually so that the graph focused more on the differences between situations. If the graph was a different shape (e.g., more of a square than a longer, thinner rectangle), then some of the information might have been de-emphasized.