
**Abstract:**

Scientific psychology involves both identifying and classifying phenomena of interest (description) and revealing the causes and mechanisms that contribute towards these phenomena arising (explanation). Within personality psychology, some propose that aspects of behaviour and cognition can be explained with reference to personality traits. However, certain conceptual and logical issues cast doubt upon the satisfactoriness of traits as coherent explanatory constructs. This paper discusses ‘explanation’ in psychology and the problems of circularity and reification. An analysis of relations and intrinsic properties is then developed to address the logical requirements necessary for circumventing these problems. An examination of McCrae and Costa’s defense of traits as explanatory constructs, in terms of ‘tendencies’ and ‘dispositions’, highlights logical issues that prevent traits, so defined, from explaining trait-like behaviours and cognitions. The logical requirements for a coherent trait explanatory account are outlined and possible explanatory directions in trait-approaches are discussed. The ongoing tendency towards fallacious reasoning in psychology and suggestions for preventing this are further examined.