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Pervin L. A. Performance and satisfaction as a function of individual-environment fit.
Psychol. Bull. 69:56-68, 1968.
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Research is reviewed that treats performance and satisfaction as a function of the interaction between the characteristics of the individual and those of the environment. Relevant theoretical positions are reviewed. Alternative models for the analysis of interactions or transactions and critical issues are discussed. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI®) indicates that this paper has been cited in over 120 publications.]

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In 1958, in a graduate seminar, the distinguished and creative psychologist Henry Murray told a simple story. It concerned a Harvard student who had psychological difficulties and had to drop out. He became a combat-jet pilot, distinguished himself during the course of many missions, and felt well. After discharge, he returned to Harvard, only to again be beset by serious psychological difficulties. The point being made, one that influenced the writing of this article as well as all of my later thinking, was that psychological stress is an interactional matter. While the combat environment taxes the resources of some, it is the academic environment that is too demanding for others. In sum, there was the need to consider individual-environment relations and the question of match or fit.

Murray's general orientation and specific need-press framework¹ provided the basis for my own early research on academic performance and satisfaction as a function of student-college interaction. Initially, this research used the Activities Index and College Characteristic Index to assess students and colleges according to Murray's need-press system. However, it soon became clear that the scales

on the two instruments did not match one another, and, together with an outstanding Princeton undergraduate, Donald Rubin, my attention was directed to the semantic differential as a device for addressing the questions of interest. This led to the development of TAPE (Transactional Analysis of Personality and Environment) and the testing of the individual-environment model in a variety of college environments.^{2,3} In addition, TAPE was translated into foreign languages and used in other countries with correspondingly positive results.

My own research in this area was diverted for two reasons. First, while the individual-environment model and TAPE seemed useful, the research did not clearly address two issues noted in the *Psychological Bulletin* article—the units of analysis to be employed and the processes involved. Second, and of greater personal significance, I became a senior administrator at an innovative college. The opportunity thus presented itself, during the idealism of the 1960s, to design an environment to maximize the potential for student growth and development. By the time this experiment had ended, the field of personality was embroiled in the person-situation controversy, which continues to the present.^{4,5} Following the rise of Skinnerian behaviorism, there was an emphasis on controlling variables in the environment and a relative neglect of person variables. Then came the response of individual differences psychologists, in particular followers of the trait approach, with their emphasis on person variables. Finally, the questions of individual or situation and person *versus* situational determinants of behavior were dropped in favor of interactionism, though the questions of units and processes remained.^{6,7}

The 1968 article has been cited frequently because it focused attention on an interactional approach and addressed issues that cut across diverse areas within the field of psychology. In certain areas, such as organizational psychology, the approach has remained important, while in other areas, such as personality, there is evidence of renewed interest in researching the relevant issues.

1. Harvard Psychological Clinic. *Explorations in personality: a clinical and experimental study of fifty men of college age.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. 761 p.
2. Pervin L. A. & Rubin D. B. Student dissatisfaction with college and the college dropout: a transactional approach. *J. Soc. Psychol.* 72:285-95, 1967. (Cited 20 times.)
3. Pervin L. A. A twenty-college study of student-college interaction using TAPE: rationale, reliability, and validity. *J. Educ. Psychol.* 58:290-302, 1967. (Cited 45 times.)
4. ———. *Current controversies and issues in personality.* New York: Wiley, 1984. 357 p.
5. ———. *Personality.* *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 36:83-114, 1985.
6. Magnusson D. & Endler N., eds. *Personality at the crossroads: current issues in interactional psychology.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1977. 454 p.
7. Pervin L. A. & Lewis M., eds. *Perspectives in interactional psychology.* New York: Plenum, 1978. 325 p.