

## Adult Playfulness Trait Scale (APTS) and User Guidelines

**Instruction:** Below are a number of statements that can be used to describe people and their beliefs in general. Please respond as quickly and accurately as possible by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree
1. I believe in having a good time	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Fun is a very important part of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I try to have fun no matter what I am doing	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I can make almost any activity fun for me to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I can find fun in most situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I am often the person who starts fun things in a situation	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I appreciate fun things started by other people	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. When someone else starts something that is fun, I'm happy to follow along	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I enjoy fun things that other people initiate	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. If I want to do something, I usually don't let what other people may think stop me	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Sometimes I can do things without worrying about consequences	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I understand social rules but most of the time I am not restricted by them	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I don't fear losing anything by being silly	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I don't always follow rules	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I often do unplanned things	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I often do things on the spur of the moment	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I often act upon my impulses	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I often follow my spur-of-the-moment <i>feelings</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I often pursue my spur-of-the-moment <i>thoughts</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Note:** The original scale used a 7-point scale with a middle point labeled as “neither agree nor disagree”. Users may adopt a 6-point scale (shown here) if a response set associated with using a mid-point is a concern.

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## User Guidelines

Created by Dr. Xiangyou Shen

Version: October 25, 2023

The Adult Playfulness Trait Scale (APTS) is designed to measure the disposition to engage in playful behavior, specifically the tendency to invoke a free, uninhibited mindset to pursue fun, enjoyment, or amusement often in a spontaneous fashion. The scale includes 19 items designed to assess three essential qualities that define the playful disposition: fun-seeking motivation, uninhibitedness, and spontaneity. (see [the APTS Scale Composition](#) below)

The theoretical framework of the APTS is based on the *Latent-network Trait Conception* (LNeT) first proposed by Shen and colleagues (Shen, Chick, & Zinn, [2014a](#)). The LNeT integrates the latent dispositional view of trait in classic personality theories and the network view of social cognitive theories. It defines a trait as a set of interconnected dispositional qualities, which, when activated in a trait-relevant context, jointly drive a specific type of behavior. Consistent with the LNeT, playfulness is defined as a compound trait that consists of three inter-connected attributes that, when activated, drive the individual to pursue or react to internal and/or external fun stimuli with a goal to entertain or amuse oneself and/or others. Social interactions provide a common context for playful engagement, but are neither necessary nor sufficient for play to occur.

Systematic psychometric studies reported supporting evidence for the APTS' reliability and validity (see [Reliability and Validity Evidence](#)). The APTS was originally developed in English and tested in North America. It is increasingly used in international applications, with translated versions in different languages being developed (see [the APTS in Other Languages and Collaborations](#)).

The APTS is part of the **Adult Play and Playfulness Assessment Battery** developed by Dr. Shen and associates, which includes two additional instruments—the Psychological Situations for Play Scale (PSPS) and the Playful States Scale (PSS)—that can be used to assess the environment for play and the quality of play engagement, respectively (Shen, [2020](#)). Combined, these instruments can be used in causal modeling of the playful trait-environment interactions and corresponding behavioral and health outcomes (see Figure 2 in [An Interactionist Framework for Playfulness Research](#)). Interested users are welcome to contact Dr. Shen for access of the PSPS and the PSS.

## The APTS Scale Composition and Conceptual Model

The APTS contains three sub-scales, each measuring an essential quality of the playful disposition. Items were derived from literature and empirical data. Figure 1 presents the APTS' Conceptual model. A brief description of each (sub-)dimension is provided below:

*Fun-seeking Motivation* refers to the intrinsic motivational style that drives the individual to actively derive fun or pursue fun or amusing activities in the environment (including one's own mind). This dimension includes three sub-dimensions: *Fun Belief*, a deeply-held belief that prioritizes fun, pleasure, and enjoyment in life (measured by items 1, 2); *Initiative*, actively creating fun activities (measured by items 3-6); *Reactivity*, being responsive to fun stimuli (measured by items 7-9).

*Uninhibitedness* refers to the ability to liberate one's mindset and invoke a sense of freedom, often through overcoming, negotiating, or disregarding perceived constraints (measured by items 10-14).

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*Spontaneity* refers to the mental propensity to respond promptly without deep thought or premeditation (measured by items 15-19).

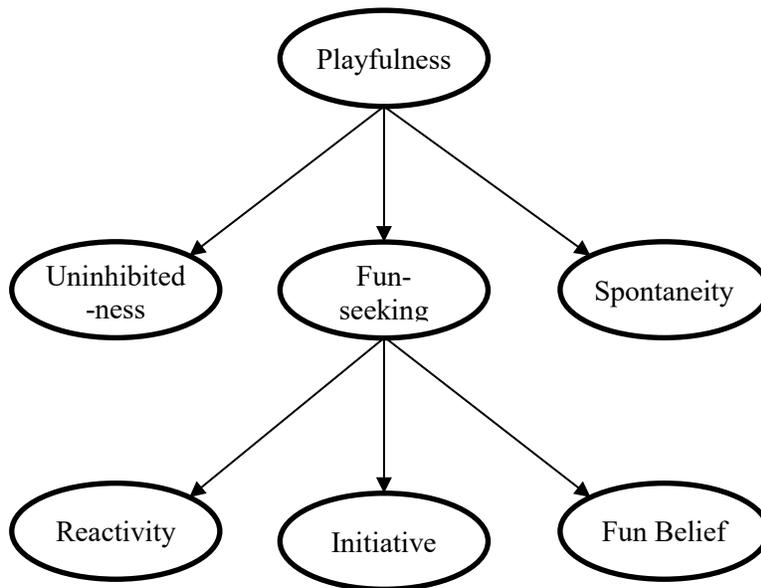


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of the APTS (adapted from Shen et al., 2014a)

## Scoring Instruction for the APTS

Users are encouraged to compute composite total scores or sub-scale scores based on factor scores derived from higher order factor analyses. Alternatively, users may score the APTS using the averaging method described below:

- A **sub-scale composite score** can be calculated for each individual on each sub-scale by averaging the corresponding subset of items. Five sub-scale composite scores can be calculated for the five first-order factors, namely Fun Belief, Initiative, Reactivity, Uninhibitedness, and Spontaneity. These sub-scale scores can be used independently or jointly to predict relevant downstream behavioral, affective, or other outcome variables.
- A **Fun-seeking Motivation composite score** can be calculated for each individual by averaging the composite scores of Fun Belief, Initiative, and Reactivity sub-scales to provide a motivation-level measure. The Motivation composite scores can be used independently (i.e., not accompanied by Uninhibitedness and Spontaneity scores) to predict relevant behavioral, affective, or other outcome variables.
- A **Playfulness composite score** can be calculated for each individual by averaging across the Fun-seeking Motivation, Uninhibitedness, Spontaneity sub-scales.

## Reliability and Validity Evidence

Systematic psychometric studies reported supporting evidence for the APTS' reliability and validity.

- *Face validity* and *content validity* were validated through expert reviews (Shen et al., [2014a](#)).
- *Structural validity* was confirmed by higher-order CFA that reported good model fit in adult and young adult samples (Shen et al., [2014a](#), Shen et al., [2017](#)).

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- *Predictive validity*, *concurrent validity*, and *convergent validity* were assessed by correlations with average playful behavior tendency ( $r = 0.55$ ), self-as-entertainment subscales ( $r = 0.18 - 0.30$ ), and independent global measures of playfulness ( $r = 0.59$ ) as well as informant ratings (Cohen's  $d = 1.3$ ), respectively (Shen et al., [2014b](#)).
- Adequate *internal consistencies* were reported for the entire scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) and all subscales (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.68 - 0.87$ , Shen et al., [2014a](#)), and supported by findings from independent studies in diverse fields from education to health studies (e.g., Shen, Liu, & Song, [2021](#); Erez et al., 2016; Jovanović, [2020](#); Yurt et al., [2016](#)).
- Cross-instrument comparisons suggested that the APTS demonstrated the highest *criterion validity* relative to other playfulness scales (Barnett, [2018](#)). In Barnett ([2018](#)), the APTS was compared to the Other-directed–Light-hearted–Intellectual–Whimsical or OLIW Model by Proyer ([2017](#)); the Playfulness Scale for Young Adults or PSYA by Barnett ([2007](#)), and the Adult Playfulness Scale or APS, by Glynn and Webster ([1992](#)).

## The APTS in Other Languages and Collaborations

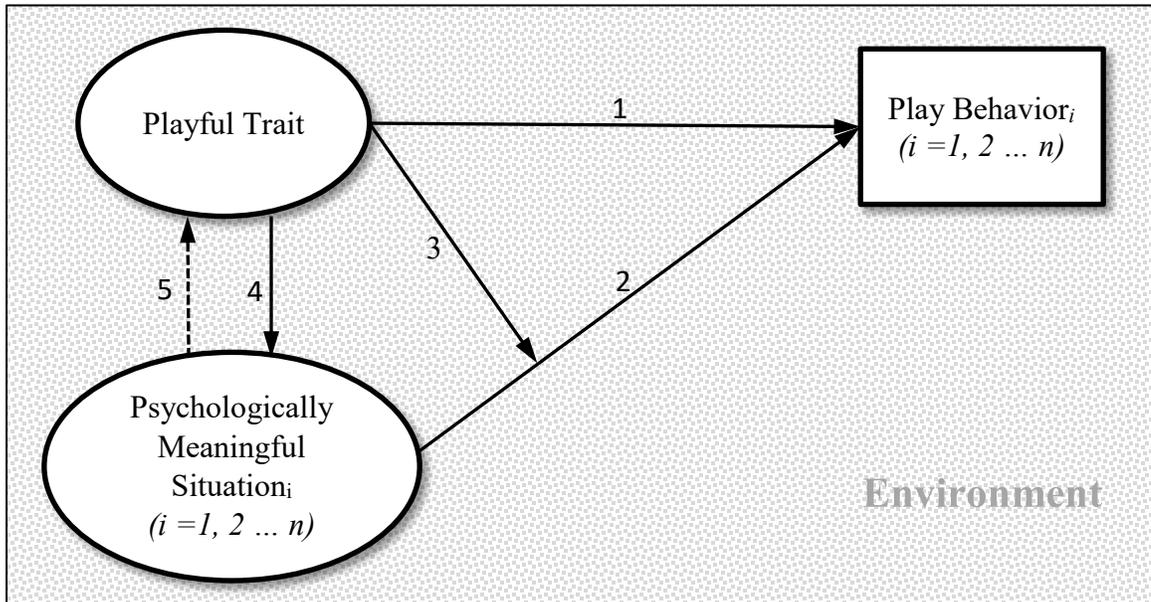
The APTS-English version is in various stages of being translated into a number of languages, including Korean, Chinese, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Indonesian, Serbian and Turkish. Users looking for the APTS in a non-English language should search journals in that language to see if one exists.

Researchers interested in collaboration (e.g., scale applications, scale translation or cultural adaptation) are welcome to contact Dr. Xiangyou (Sharon) Shen ([sharon.shen@oregonstate.edu](mailto:sharon.shen@oregonstate.edu)).

## An Interactionist Framework for Playfulness Research

The APTS conceptualization and measurement is part of the interactionist framework for playfulness research, which posits that playfulness interacts with psychologically meaningful situational factors to give rise to playful behavior (Figure 2, Shen, [2020](#)). For researchers who are interested in studying the playful trait-environment interactions, two additional scales—the Psychological Situations for Play Scale (PSPS) and the Playful States Scale (PSS)—are available for measuring the behavioral and situational component of the framework (see Shen, [2020](#) or contact Dr. Shen for the scales).

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*Figure 1.* An Interactionist Framework in the Context of Playfulness Research. This figure illustrates that, the *playful trait*, an internal dispositional attribute (represented by an oval shape denoting a latent construct), interacts with the *environment* (denoted by the grey, white-noise patterned background and greyed out text) in the form of *psychologically meaningful situations* (also represented by an oval shape), giving rise to the *play behavior* (represented by a rectangular shape that denotes an observable variable), an overt state manifestation of playfulness in a given situation at a given time. The direct effects of the playful trait and psychological situation on play behavior are represented by the solid arrow 1 and 2, respectively. The playful trait remains relatively stable in the short to modest term; the play behavior exhibits moment to moment and cross-situational (within-individual) variability (indicated by the subscript  $i$  attached to play behavior and psychologically meaningful situation). How a situation is perceived can be shaped by the playful trait (represented by the solid arrow 3, which denotes a moderating effect) or other relevant personal attributes (not included in this illustration). Individuals may also directly impact the situation via processes related to the playful trait (indicated by the solid arrow 4) or other personal attributes (not included in the diagram). Situations as perceived by the individual may also exert a momentary influence on the trait (indicated by the dashed arrow 5). A persisting environment in the form of repeated situations may exert incremental impacts on the trait, resulting in changes in the trait over time (adapted from Shen, [2020](#)).

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