

# 15 Goal Accomplishment Style and Psychological Type: Cultural Variations

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The extraverted tendency of the West and the introverted tendency of the East have one important purpose in common: both make desperate efforts to conquer the mere naturalness of life.  
C. G. Jung (1939)

It is possible to know, intellectually, that cultural differences exist and that, in a multicultural society, we must all be sensitive to individual and cultural differences. However, we often do not have an opportunity to step out of the mainstream of our own attempts to “conquer the mere naturalness of life” and reflect on the meaning and, in particular, the type-related implications of difference. This conference has opened a new avenue for type exploration and promises to lead us to a better understanding of the human condition, whether one finds it in the West or in the East. The research that I will be discussing addresses Jung’s observation that the cultural orientation of the West tends to be extraverted. I will be reporting on two motivation-related studies: the first undertaken with 1116 American adults in southwestern Pennsylvania and the second with 252 seventh and eighth grade students at the Jay Neff Middle School, Keystone Oaks School District, a district south of the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These studies are an outgrowth of work that I have been pursuing in the area of achievement motivation since 1980.

## BACKGROUND

In 1980, seeking a better understanding of the intricacies of intrinsic motivation, I read McClelland’s *The Achieving Society* (1976) and began an exploration of the entrepreneurship literature. My field is education, so I was particularly interested in research related to motivation in school settings. I found a comprehensive study, capitalizing on McClelland’s work, that was conducted by Richard deCharms (1976) at a middle school in St. Louis, Missouri. deCharms reported successful efforts undertaken to help students become more self-directed and cited a psychological domain of behaviors, the Conative Domain, as a useful construct within which to examine the motivation phenomenon. In this paper, we will consider (1) specific conative behaviors related to striving and volition, (2) the relationship between those behaviors and psychological type attitudes and functions, and (3) the implications of type-related goal accomplishment style for the individuation process.

## THE CONATIVE DOMAIN

Occasionally, a useful idea gets lost—or, at least, may suffer from neglect. Such a position has been advanced by Hilgard (1980) in a review of the tripartite classification of mental activities: cognition, affection, and conation. German and Scottish faculty psychologists in the late 1700's believed that the mind had three faculties: cognition (knowing), affection (valuing), and conation (striving). This approach to the study of the mind lasted well into the twentieth century. By then, however, behavioral psychologists in the United States were more interested in linking the discipline of psychology to the natural sciences than to philosophy; thus, conation, a behavioral domain that deals with striving, volition, and the will—not easily measured—was ignored (Atman, 1987). Striving behaviors, i.e., the capacity to be purposeful, determined, and persistent, are behaviors that are associated with a strong will (Assagioli, 1973) and can be classified in the conative domain. The term, *conation*, appears in almost every dictionary and is defined as:

1. Aspects of mental processes or behavior directed toward action or change and including impulse, desire, volition and striving (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1971).
2. ...aspect of man's psychic life having to do with striving and will, traditionally distinguished from cognition and affection (C. V. Good, *Dictionary of Education*, 1973).

McDougall (1932) observed, in discussing the mind in action, that:

Although our modes of striving are so various, ranging from intense bodily activity to intellectual activity that involves a minimum of bodily expression, we find the same words suitable for describing this striving aspect common to all such activities. We say we are trying, striving, endeavoring, paying keen attention, making an effort, working hard, doing our utmost, exerting ourselves, concentrating all our energies; in technical terms, we are manifesting *conation*.

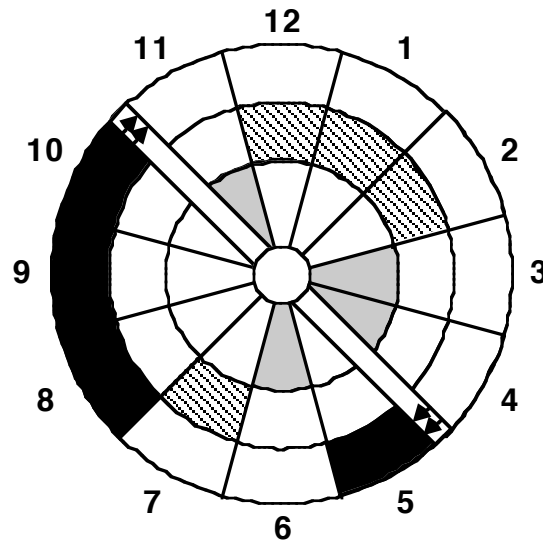
For purposes of this discussion, conation is defined as “vectored energy: i.e., personal energy that has both direction and magnitude” (Atman, 1986).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONATIVE DOMAIN IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

The conative domain is a useful construct for educators since it differentiates between the intellectual “knowing” of the cognitive domain (Bloom, 1956) and the direct, observable application of the “knowing—the “doing.” In essence, “doing” directly involves the level of attention, or energy, that the doer invests in the enterprise. Knowing is not enough to insure doing, however. In addition, the willingness to invest energy in an enterprise involves not only knowledge, but the “valuing” found in the affective domain as well (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). For a variety of reasons, individuals sometimes do what they do not value but not as a general rule. Individuals, either consciously or unconsciously establish priorities.

The conative domain (to refer, again, to McDougall, 1932) takes into account the level of personal energy that can be invested in a task: “We say we are striving, endeavoring, paying keen attention, making an effort, working hard, doing our

Figure 15.1  
The Conation Cycle



1. Recognize need, problem, challenge, opportunity (see and hear what is going on)
2. Set goal (decide what to do)
3. Brainstorm alternatives
4. Assess risks associated with each alternative
5. Select strategy (make up your mind, be decisive, decide how to do it)
6. GET YOUR ACT IN GEAR (visualize how things will be when you have accomplished your goal)
7. Organize (make a plan to do the work in a specific time-frame)
8. Make in happen (follow through on the plan)
9. Push on (don't procrastinate)
10. Wrap it up (finish what you start)
11. Ooo & Ahh! (evaluate and give yourself a treat when you have accomplished the goal)
12. Purpose, long range direction

The model is shown, visually, in the figure above. Also shown are three categories of goal-oriented behavior: ACTING , PLANNING , and REFLECTING . The figure demonstrates the interaction of reflecting, planning, and acting behaviors within the total goal accomplishment process. The small arrows within the model indicate the times when one must "gear up" (energize) to act and then "gear down" (disengage) in order to reflect and plan.

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utmost, exerting ourselves, concentrating all our energies; in technical terms, we are manifesting *conation*."

## OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE CONATIVE DOMAIN

The conative domain has been operationalized as a twelve-step problem solving-decision making model, the Conation Cycle (Atman, 1982, see Figure 15.1). The Cycle, a mnemonic visual derived from the achievement motivation literature and an entrepreneurial case study, depicts twelve striving behaviors associated with goal accomplishment.

Generally, the descriptors for the 12 steps in the Conation Cycle are self-explanatory. Definitions (Atman, 1986) for Steps 6, 8, 10 and 11 may be helpful, however, in conveying the energy dynamics that underlie the model.

*Step 6: Get your act in gear.*

An individual who scores high in this category is one who visualizes how things are going to be when the goal is accomplished, mentally rehearses the planned activity, and imagines how successful and proud he/she will feel when the goal is achieved.

*Step 8: Make it Happen.*

An individual who scores high in this category is one who is action-oriented, immerses him/herself in the “doing” of a project, pays attention to environmental changes that occur as the action develops, and is able to make changes in the plan if needed.

*Step 10: Wrap it up.*

An individual who scores high in this category is one who meets deadlines, completes what he/she starts, pays attention to details so that things are not “lost through the cracks,” and puts things away once the work is finished.

*Step 11: Ooo & Ahh!*

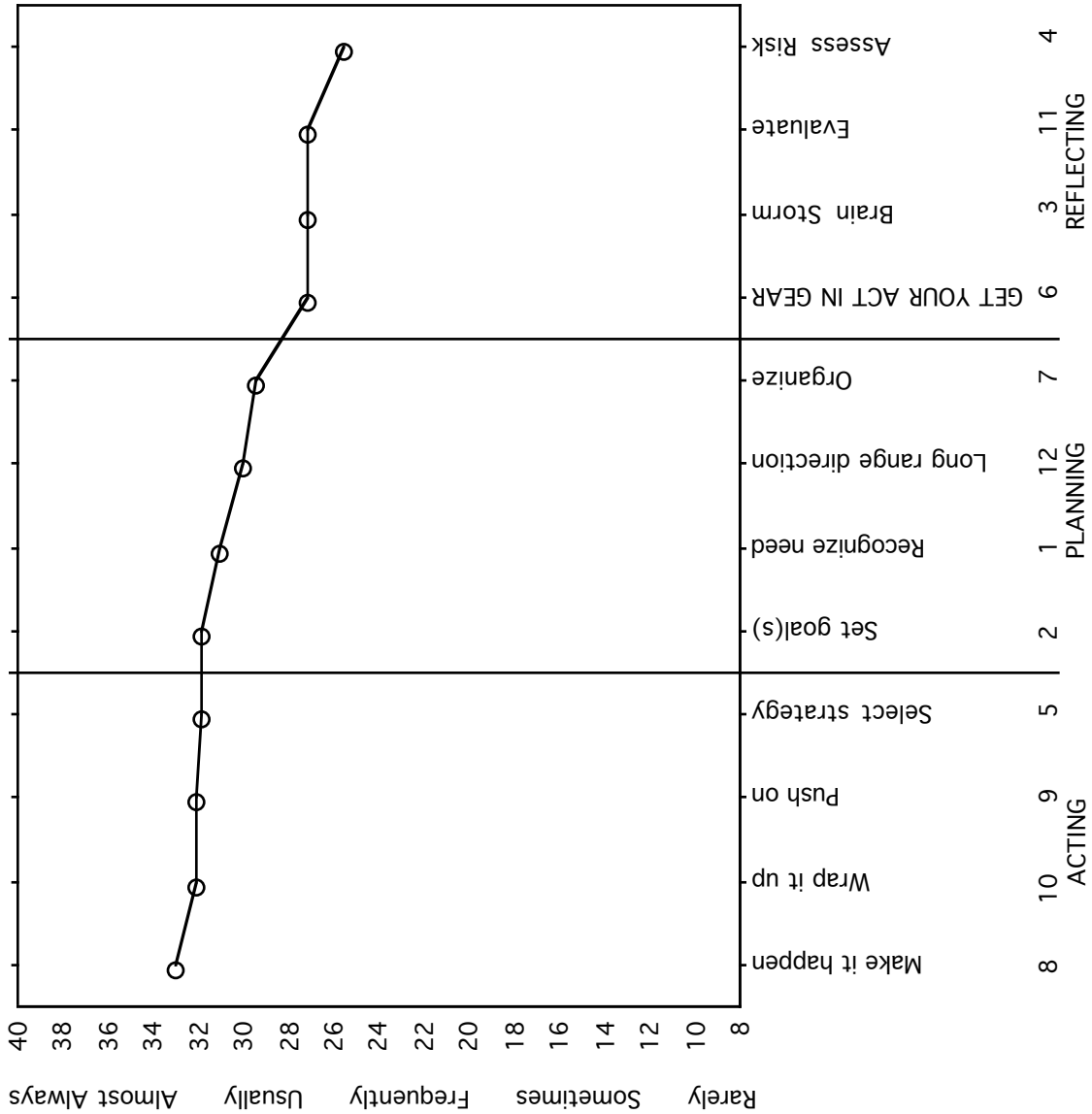
An individual who scores high in this category is one who uses rigorous criteria to evaluate/critique all aspects of the work, thus providing a strong base for future risk assessment and who rewards him/herself for a job that is complete and well done.

The consistency of an individual’s behavior related to each of the twelve goal-oriented steps in the Conation Cycle is called his/her *goal accomplishment style*.

## MEASURING GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT STYLE

An individual’s goal accomplishment style can be measured by the extent to which he/she demonstrates goal-oriented behaviors. The Goal Orientation Index, a 96 item self-report inventory based on the twelve steps found in the Conation Cycle, has been developed to provide users with a profile of their goal accomplishment

Figure 15.2  
American Adult Profile: N = 1116



What is your Goal Accomplishment Style?  
 To determine your Goal Accomplishment Style and compare it with that of the 1116 American adults who took the Index between January and December, 1986, place your category scores on the appropriate numbers on the profile found on this page. The average adult scores for each conation cycle category are displayed as a solid line beginning with category 8. Make it happen, on the left and continuing to category 4, Assess risks, on the right. Note: the twelve categories are rearranged to demonstrate the strongest adult personal behaviors (Acting on the left) and the least strong adult personal behaviors (Reflecting on the right). Place a dot for your Category score for number 8 on the profile to the right:  
 a) on the line above the vertical scale numbers (8-40, found on the left and right sides of the profile).  
 b) In the middle of the column above the Category name: make it happen, for Category 8. Continue in like manner with other Category scores.  
 You can now examine the relative strength of your goal accomplishment style in the three areas of personal behavior: Acting, Planning, and Reflecting.

Table 15.1  
Significance of Correlations between GOI Categories and MBTI Elements: Adult Data

GOI Category	Extravert	Introvert	Sensing	Intuition	Thinking	Feeling	Judging	Perception
1. Recognize need,	.001			.001	.05		.001	
2. Set goal	.001				.001		.001	
3. Brainstorm	.05			.001	.001		.001	
4. Assess risk							.001	
5. Select strategy	.001			.05	.001		.001	
6. Visualize							.001	
7. Organize			.001				.001	
8. Make it happen				.001			.001	
9. Push on	.05				.001		.001	
10. Wrap it up					.001		.001	
11. Ooo & Ahh!					.05		.001	
12. Long range goal	.001			.01			.001	

style (Atman, 1986). Data from 1116 American adults who took the GOI during 1985-1986 indicate three general areas of goal accomplishment behavior: acting, planning, and reflecting (indicated in Figure 15.2). American adults tend to be “doers,” they are decisive, they “make it happen” and finish what they start rather than procrastinate. They are not equally strong in planning behaviors (recognizing needs, problems, challenges, and opportunities; setting short or long range goals, and organizing). They are least strong in reflecting behaviors (visualizing, considering alternatives, evaluating, and assessing risks).

### Psychological Type and Goal Accomplishment Style: American Adult Data

Since it appears that some individuals seem better able to organize and manage themselves through the goal-setting/accomplishment process than others, a study was undertaken to examine the “fit” between an individual’s goal accomplishment style and psychological type. The 1116 adults to whom the GOI was administered in 1985-1986 also took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Data indicate a significant difference in the profiles of paired psychological type elements (extraversion- introversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling and judging-perception) on various categories of the Goal Orientation Index. (See Table 15.1.)

Of particular interest is the number of significant correlations found between specific categories on the Goal Orientation Index and various psychological type attitudes and functions. It is clear that, if this study were a race, extraversion, intuition, thinking, and judging would be the winners. There were no significant correlations found between GOI categories and the feeling function or the perception attitude. An individual might become successful as a goal accomplisher, but, without a capacity for caring or empathy, he/she might live life with a “hollow heart.” A significant correlation was found between only one GOI category and the sensing function:

Organize. This correlation is consistent with psychological type theory in that individuals who prefer the sensing function are factual, reality-based, and who pay attention to concrete details.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE AND GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT STYLE: MIDDLE SCHOOL DATA**

**Extraversion-Introversion.** The goal accomplishment style profile of 175 students who preferred the extravert attitude was significantly stronger, as measured by t-tests, in nine of the twelve categories on the GOI than 77 students who preferred the introverted attitude. (See Figure 15.3) The categories included: (1) *Acting* Categories: 10, Wrap it up, and 5, Select strategy; 2) *Planning* Categories: (2) Set goals, 1, Recognize need, problem, challenge, opportunity; 12, Purpose, long range direction and 7, Organize, and (3) *Reflecting* Categories: 6, Visualize (Get Your Act in Gear), 3, Brainstorm alternatives and 4, Assess risks. These data compare favorably with the GOI-MBTI adult data (Atman, 1990) in which the extraverted attitude was significantly stronger for the adults in six of the twelve categories. Data from the two studies strongly suggest that the extraverted attitude is linked to the process of goal accomplishment.

**Sensing-Intuition.** A significant difference, as measured by t-tests, between the sensing and intuitive goal accomplishment style profiles occurred in only three of the twelve categories; two in favor of the intuitive function (8, Make it happen and 1, Recognize need, problem, challenge, opportunity) and one in favor of the sensing function (5, Select strategy) (see Figure 15.4.). As noted earlier, in the adult 1985-86 GOI-MBTI study, five of the intuitive categories were significantly stronger, including categories 8 and 1. The sensing function was significantly stronger in only one of the categories: 7, Organize (See Figure 15.2). Data from the two studies suggests that the intuitive function is more closely linked with goal accomplishment than the sensing function. Although, in the case of the adult sample, being able to get oneself organized (Category 7) becomes more imperative as tasks and life problems become more complicated.

**Thinking-Feeling.** In the 1986 adult GOI-MBTI study, individuals who preferred the thinking function over the feeling function had significantly stronger goal accomplishment style profiles in 10 out of 12 categories of goal-oriented behavior as measured by the Goal Orientation Index (see Figure 15.2). In the Jay Neff Middle School study, however, the thinking function proved to have a significantly stronger profile, as measured by t-tests, in only one of the twelve categories (see Figure 15.5): *Acting* category: 5, Select Strategy. Of the five remaining categories where a significant difference occurred, the significant difference was in favor of students with a strong preference for the feeling function. Distribution across the categories included one in the *Acting* category: 8, Make it happen and in the *Planning* category: 2, Set goals; 1, Recognize need, problem challenge opportunity; 12, Purpose, Long range direction, and 7, Organize. There were no significant differences between the thinking and feeling function profiles in the *Reflecting* dimension of the goal setting process (see Figure 15.5).

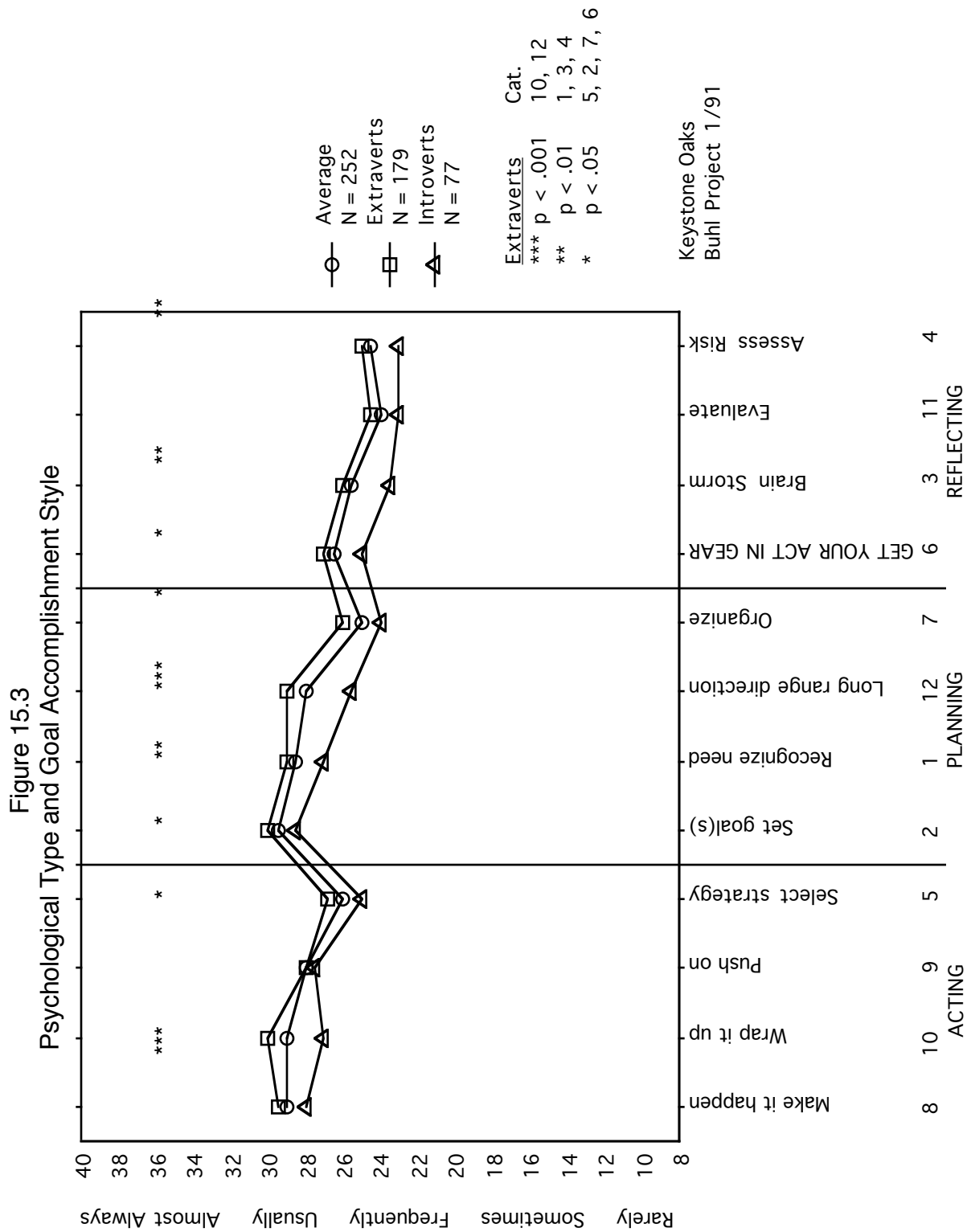


Figure 15.4  
Psychological Type and Goal Accomplishment Style

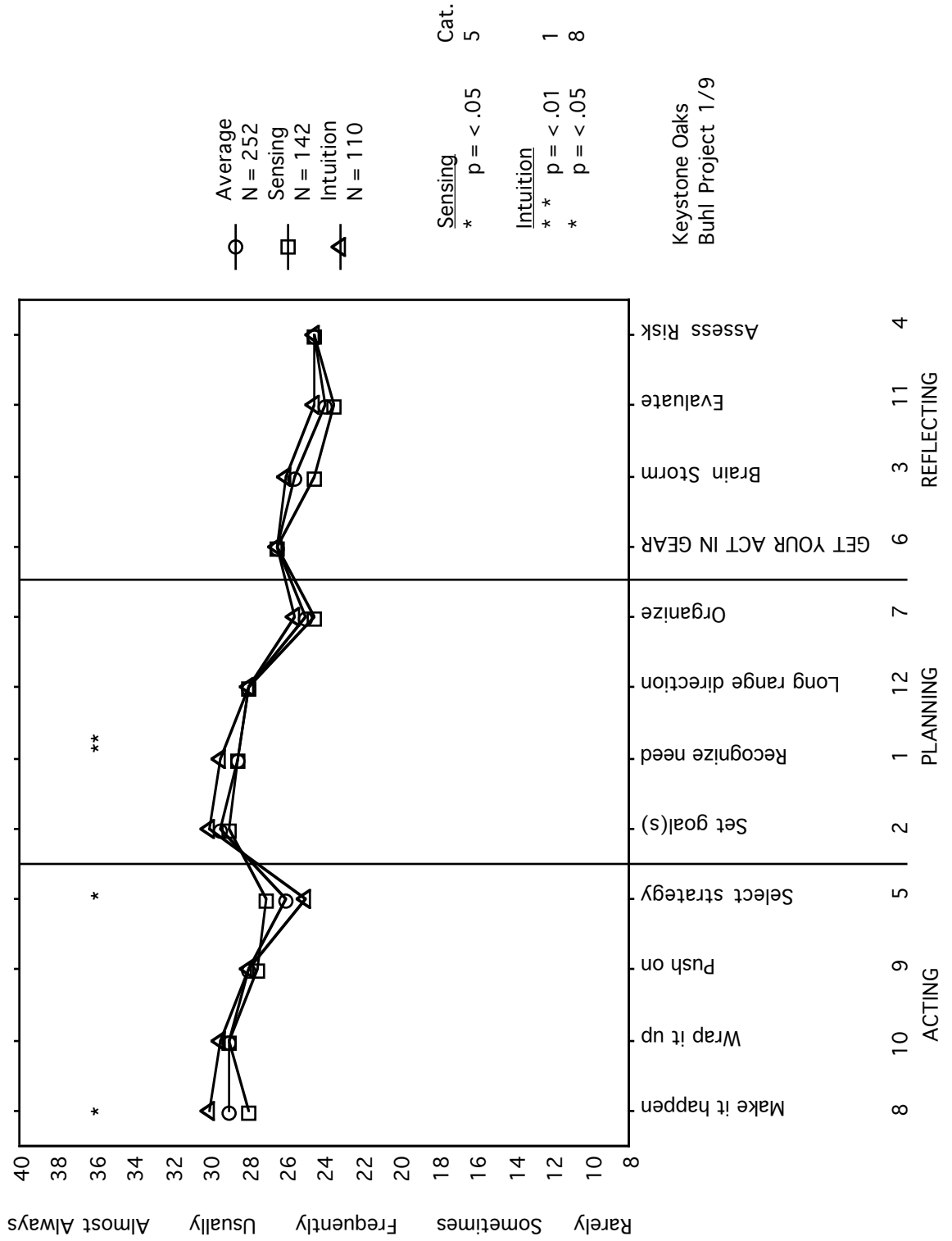


Figure 15.5  
Psychological Type and Goal Accomplishment Style

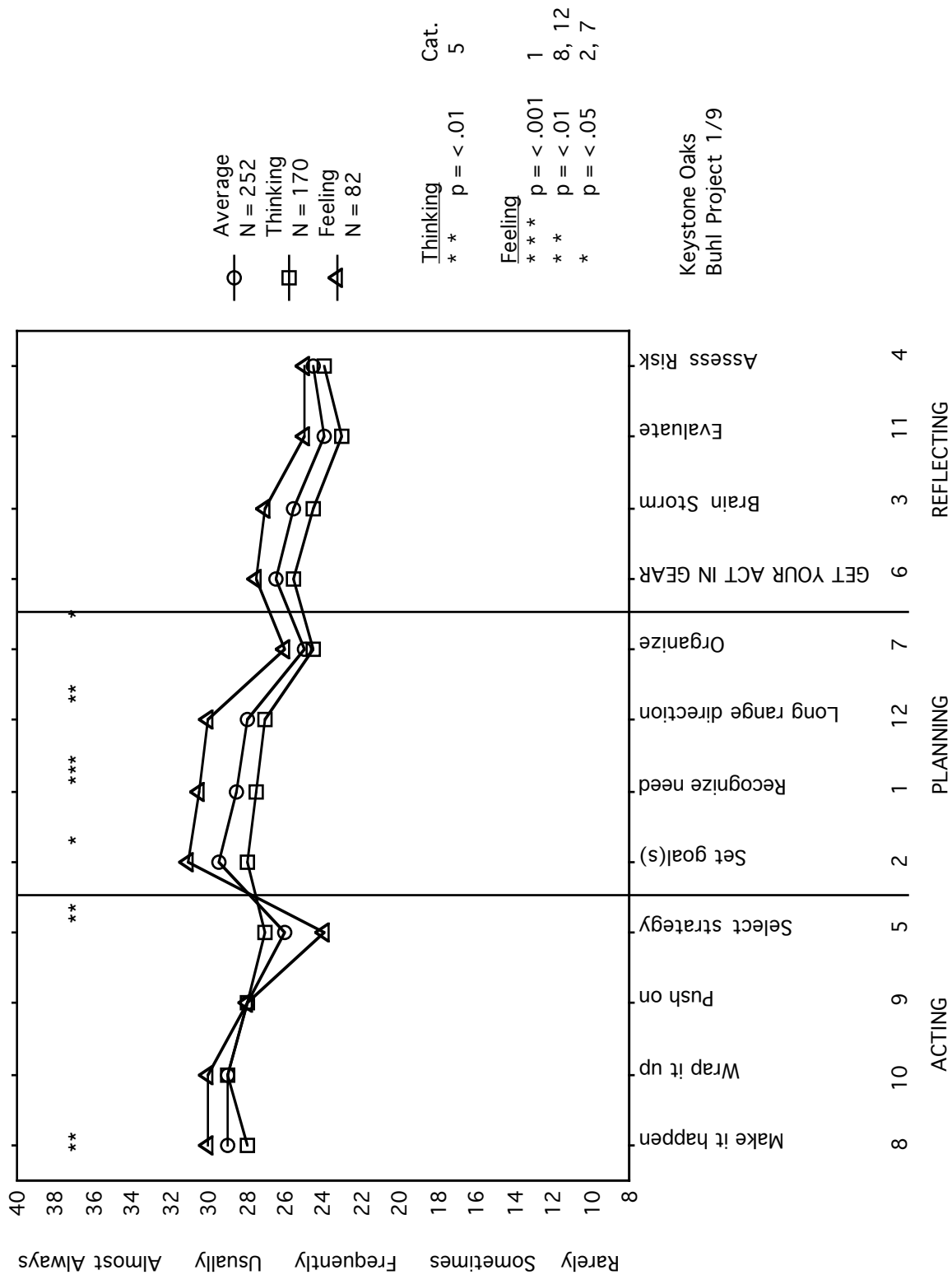
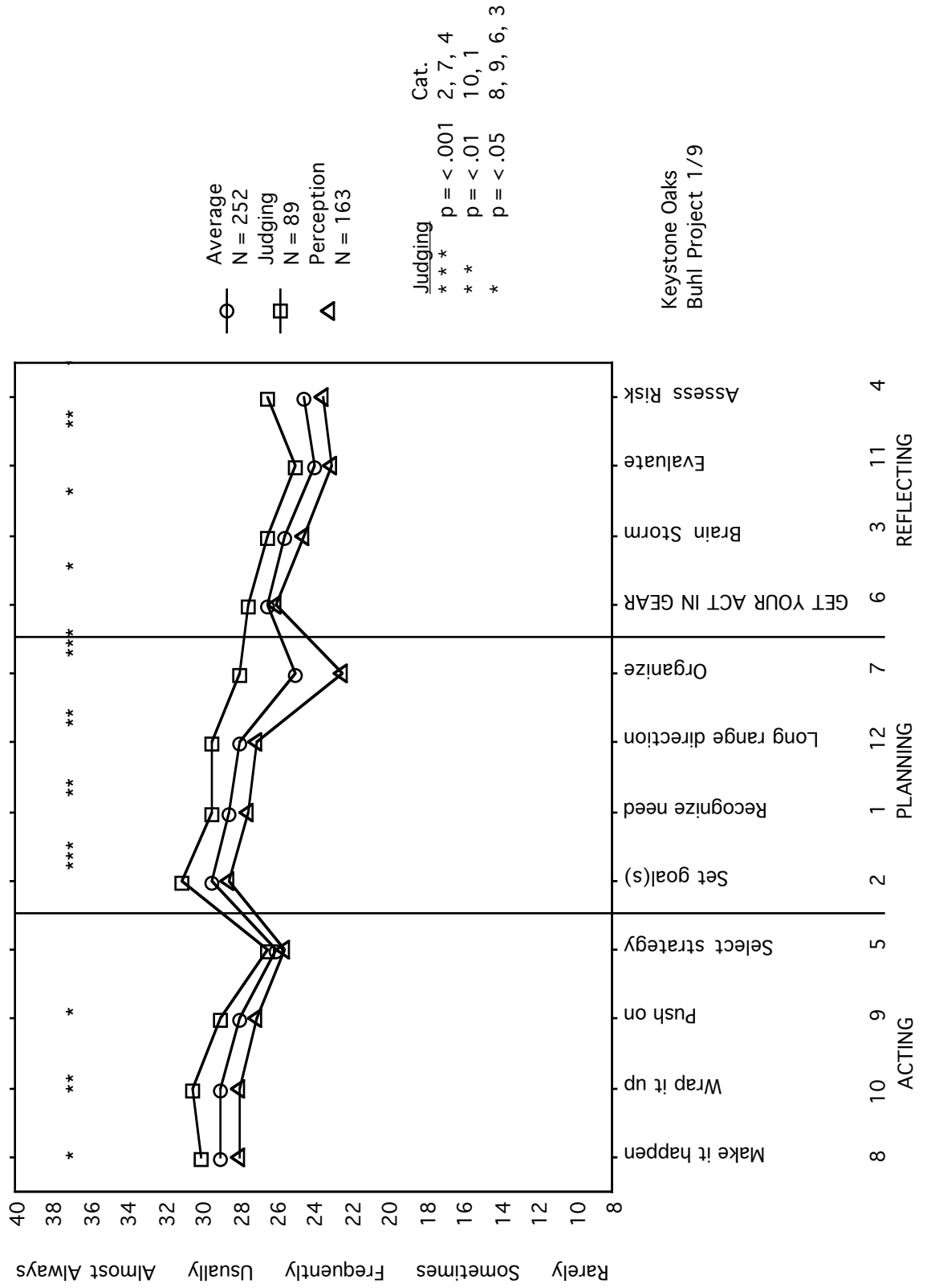


Figure 15.6  
Psychological Type and Goal Accomplishment Style



The fact that a significant number of students who preferred the feeling function were also goal oriented (in contrast to the adult data where the feeling function was not correlated with the goal setting process at all) may reflect strong parental support for the school program, or it may reflect the positive school climate that exists at Jay Neff Middle School. Teachers and administrators are very supportive of the students and seek to create an atmosphere in the school that is open and accepting. Under those conditions, a middle school student who is concerned about the feelings of others may “flower” in the supportive school climate and endeavor to do his/her best academically as well as personally and socially.

**Judging-Perception.** The 1989 Jay Neff Middle School pattern of significant differences between the judging and perceiving profiles, as measured by t-tests was strikingly similar to the pattern found in the 1986 GOI-MBTI adult study. In that study, a significant difference was found in favor of the judging attitude in all twelve categories. In the Jay Neff study (see Figure 15.6) significant differences in favor of the judging attitude were found in eleven out of the twelve GOI categories. The only category where a significant difference did not occur was Category 5, Select strategy. The lack of decisiveness on the part of all students (students who preferred judging as well as those who preferred perception indicated that they only “frequently” made up their minds) suggests that at the middle school level, students do not feel confident in their own decision making capability and they recognize that most decisions are still being made for them, by parents or by teachers.

### INDIVIDUATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE, AND CONATION

According to Jung’s theory, each individual is engaged in the life journey of *individuation*, the process of integrating both the conscious and unconscious elements of the personality into an integrated “whole” (von Franz, 1975). The theory of individuation seems to put psychological type theory in its proper perspective. An individual’s “type” is like a key to get in the door of life. There are sixteen types; each has positive attributes. It appears, however, that it is not the individual’s *type* (the natural strength) that is as important as how the individual handles his/her type opposite (the areas where he/she is *not* strong). Consciously participating in one’s own maturation process (accepting and learning to deal with and/or compensate for “where one is not”) is one of life’s great tasks.

Individuation, the process of personality integration, is the term Jung used to describe the maturation process (Jacobi, 1965). Individuation has been described as the process of becoming conscious (Sanford, 1980), i.e., bringing unconscious contents of the psyche to a conscious level of awareness. As an individual becomes aware of his/her own striving processes (conative potential or conative capacity) through the use of a conscious goal setting/accomplishment procedure, he/she may be in a better position to understand the complexities of the “inner landscape” and the players that can be found there. Conation, the energy associated with “impulse, desire, volition, and striving,” is one of the factors that operates in the inner landscape. Learning how to set and accomplish goals consciously puts the individual in touch with his/her internal processes, thus fostering the maturation process of individuation.

**Cultural Variations.** A close observer of the cultures of both the East and the West, Jung made the following observation concerning the long-term cultural implications for the individuation process.

In the East, the inner man has always had such a firm hold on the outer man that the world had no chance of tearing him away from his inner roots; in the West, the outer man gained the ascendancy to such an extent that he was alienated from his innermost being. (Jung, 1939)

If one entertains the assumption that Western culture is goal oriented and one agrees with Jung that in the West, the “outer man” (the extravert) has the edge (a proposition supported by the two studies reported in this paper), then individuals from the West can learn a great deal from individuals from the East, particularly about how to explore the inner landscape and facilitate the process of bringing contents from the unconscious to a conscious level of awareness. Jacobi writes that there are two kinds of individuation

1. The natural process, occurring more or less autonomously and without the participation of consciousness, and
2. The “artificial” process, aided, for instance, by analysis, developed by definite methods, and consciously experienced.

In both forms the same power is at work, striving for maturation and self-realization from the seed to the fruit, to the invisible goal immanent within them.... Everything that lives, matures; human being mature; machines do not. Thus, the natural process is goal-directed dynamism, a way of development to which all life is subject....

Like a seed growing into a tree, life unfolds stage by stage. Triumphant ascent, collapse, crises, failures, and new beginnings strew the way. It is the path trodden by the great majority of mankind, as a rule unreflectingly, unconsciously, unsuspectingly, following its labyrinthine windings from birth to death in hope and longing. It is hedged about with struggle and suffering, joy and sorrow, guilt and error, and nowhere is there security from catastrophe. For as soon as a man tries to escape every risk and prefers to experience life only in his head, in the form of ideas and fantasies, as soon as he surrenders to opinions of “how it ought to be” and, in order not to make a false step, imitates others whenever possible, he forfeits the chance of his own independent development. Only if he treads the path bravely and flings himself into life, fearing no struggle and no exertion and fighting shy of no experience, will he mature his personality more fully than the man who is ever trying to keep to the safe side of the road (Jacobi, 1965, pp. 15-16).

This previous passage, Jung speaks pointedly to individuals from the East and from the West for both the inner man and the outer man must work in concert if the promise of the individuation process is to be realized. Consciously taking charge of one’s own maturation process is not a task that can be undertaken casually, however. Jung indicated that a fifth function is needed to integrate the opposites into a whole. He identified this union of opposites as the *transcendent function*. They represent a *coincidentia oppositorum*, a union of opposites, in particular of conscious and unconscious contents, and thus transcend rational understanding (Jacobi, 1965).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us revisit Jung's words regarding the East, the West, and type: "The extraverted tendency of the West and the introverted tendency of the East have one important purpose in common: both make desperate efforts to conquer the mere naturalness of life." The individuation process occurs when unconscious contents are brought to a conscious level of awareness resulting in a "union of opposites." If our collective culture in the West, a culture characterized by extraversion, is to individuate, we must learn to reflect, to introvert, to appreciate our own "gifts differing" (Myers, 1980) as well as the gifts of others.

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