

COMPLETED RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH PAPERS IN PROGRESS

1. **Effects of Targeted Coaching on Applicant Distortion of Personality Measures** **Wolford, K., & Christiansen, N. D.**

This study evaluated the impact that reading sections of a self-coaching book had on success at faking a personality test. Participants ($N=156$) completed an initial honest personality assessment and a subsequent assessment with faking instructions under three different coaching conditions: a group that received no coaching materials in between assessments, those that were provided with two chapters from a commercial book on how to do well on personality tests used for hiring purposes, and a group that was given an additional chapter devoted to how to avoid detection on Lie scales. There were two key results from the study. First, the coaching materials resulted in greater success in distorting scores on the personality tests, but that this was primarily on the traits that had been targeted in the chapters and did not generalize to a different trait. Second, those that read the chapter on avoiding detection on Lie scales was highly successful and resulted in lower scores on the response validity scale. Implications for the use of personality tests in personnel selection are discussed.

2. **Traits Related to Potential for Leadership Advancement and Derailment from a Configural Perspective**

Christiansen, N. D., Ramesh, A., Billington, A., & Benson, M.

Personality traits associated with two aspects of leadership potential were examined based on data from 511 Mid-level Managers: potential for derailment and potential for advancement. A configural approach was adopted with participants classified into one of four groups (Satisfactory, High Derailment, High Advancement, and Risk/Reward) based on supervisory ratings of each dimension of leadership potential. Results supported the distinctiveness of these two dimensions of potential, with different trait profiles emerging for the three groups of interest relative to the Satisfactory comparison group: (a) managers high in potential for derailment were lower scores in Agreeableness; (b) managers high in potential for advancement had higher trait elevations on Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience; and (c) the Risk/Reward group (managers high in both potential for derailment and advancement) were higher in Openness to Experience and “dark side” composite scales related to intimidating, manipulative, and passive-aggressive. Implications for future research on leadership potential are discussed.

3. **Effects of Social Desirability Scores on Hiring Judgments**

Christiansen, N. D., Rozek, R., & Burns, G.

Practitioners ($N=160$) working in the area of selection and assessment read descriptions of a managerial position and the assessment profiles of two hypothetical candidates that were finalists for the job. Embedded in the profiles were scores on a battery of cognitive and personality tests that included information on socially desirable responding such that there were no social desirability (SD) scores provided, differing SD scores, or elevated SD scores for both candidates. Ratings indicated that elevated SD scores were used as personality information to infer that candidates were less candid and sincere individuals. Candidates with elevated SD scores were judged to be less hireable and less weight was given to the personality assessment. In spite of this, even when SD scores were elevated, personality test results had more influence on hiring judgments than scores on the cognitive tests. Implications are discussed in the context of research that has failed to show SD scores are useful for facilitating hiring decisions or adjusting trait scores.

4. Departures from Linearity as Evidence of Applicant Response Distortion

Christiansen, N. D., Haaland, D., & Burns, G.

Simulation research has shown that individuals who distort their responses to personality tests rise to the top of the score distribution and that the validity of their scores suffers. Two studies were conducted to examine how faking impacts the normally linear construct relationships of personality inventories. Study 1 used data from a laboratory faking study to construct samples ($n=300$) that systematically varied in the proportion of distorted responses. The samples were then partitioned to examine the effects on validity across different ranges of personality test scores. Results showed that increasing the amount of faking in the samples resulted in predictable departures from linearity, with weaker estimates of convergent validity and increased saturation with social desirability found at the top of the samples. Study 2 employed a similar approach to examine evidence of validity decay across score ranges of a sample of applicants to a state police academy ($n=442$). Consistent with the simulation, personality test scores from the top of the distribution were poorer predictors of subsequent performance but more strongly related to scores on a social desirability measures. In contrast, the linear construct relationships were consistent across the score range for a cognitive test. Implications for personnel selection are discussed.

5. Emotional Intelligence in Selection Contexts: Measurement Method, Criterion-Related Validity, and Vulnerability to Response Distortion

Janovics, J., Christiansen, N. D., & Siers, B.

Two studies examined aspects of the validity of self-report and performance-based measures of emotional intelligence (EI) relevant to their use in personnel selection. In Study 1, structural equation modeling indicated that a two-factor model with separate factors for the two types of EI measures fit better than a one-factor solution. The performance-based EI factor was more related to cognitive ability ($R=.38$) than personality ($R=.26$), whereas the self-report EI factor was more related to personality ($R=.85$) than cognitive ability ($R=.09$). Although the performance-based EI factor correlated more strongly with job performance ($\rho=.24$) than did that of the self-report ($\rho=.05$), it provided little incremental validity beyond cognitive ability and conscientiousness. In Study 2, participants were asked to complete the measures as if applying for a job, with mean scores compared to those of Study 1. Results indicated that self-report EI measures were more vulnerable to distortion than were the performance-based measures. Implications for the assessment of emotional intelligence in personnel selection contexts are discussed.

6. Using Item-Level Covariance to Detect Response Distortion on Personality Measures

Christiansen, N. D., Robie, C., & Burns, G.

A new type of response validity scale is proposed for the purpose of detecting the intentional distortion of self-report measures. Based on the premise that strong response sets increase the covariance between responses that might otherwise be relatively independent, a method was developed to identify this source of bias at the individual level. Two studies were conducted to evaluate the validity of this new measure across laboratory and field settings. Results show that individuals that score higher on the covariance index in situations where strong response sets were present were those who had distorted responses the most and whose scores on personality measures that have worse validity. The new validity scale also showed greater utility than traditional social desirability scales in detecting response distortion. Implications for use of personality tests for selection and assessment are discussed.

7. Disentangling Rater Bias from Relationships between Leader Behavior and Leadership Effectiveness

Christiansen, N. D., Gillespie, M., & Denison, D.

This study examined the relationship between leader behavior and leadership effectiveness using data from 1264 managers evaluated as part of a multisource feedback intervention that consisted of self, subordinate, peer, and supervisor ratings. Using multitrait-multirater confirmatory factor analysis the results showed the average amount of method variance attributable to rater source (71%) overshadowed the amount of trait variance measured by the intended dimensions (11%), with ratings of supervisors having those most trait variance (15%) and those of subordinates the least (6%). Structural analysis showed that after removing rater source biases and error, paths from the dimensions of leader behavior of Consistency (.46) and Mission (.35) were related to common perceptions of leadership effectiveness. In addition, leader behavior related to Involvement was related to source-specific variance in subordinates' perceptions of effectiveness (.38) and those related to Mission were linked to the unique evaluations of supervisors. Implications for multisource feedback assessments and implicit leadership theories are discussed.

8. Further Consideration of the Usefulness of Narrow Trait Measures

Christiansen, N. D., & Robie, C.

This study examined whether inclusion of narrow personality trait scales improved prediction of job performance enough to overcome increased capitalization on chance characteristics of the sample. Data were obtained from 262 mid-level managers who had completed a personality inventory and been assessed using multisource performance ratings. Three representations of traits organized under the Five-Factor Model were compared in order to better understand the contribution of variance specific to the narrow traits in the prediction of performance: common factor scores, unit-weighted composite scores, and regression-weighted composites. Results showed that on average the sets of facet scores explained an additional 9% of the variance in performance beyond summated composites and 10% beyond the factor scores (4% and 5% after correction for shrinkage). Contrary to the idea that broad-band predictors would fare better with broad criterion constructs, the increment was similar whether the criterion was a single dimension of performance or overall job performance. Recommendations include reporting results from multiple levels of the personality hierarchy and suggestions are made for situations where sample size limits the number of predictors advisably entered into a regression equation.

9. Partitioning Faking Variance: A Latent Variable Approach in Within-Subject Designs

Burns, G., & Christiansen, N. D.

Recent approaches to measuring the amount an individual has faked a self-report personality test have utilized latent variables. This paper examines how models developed to assess true intra-individual change in two-wave panel designs can be used in within-subject faking designs. This approach eliminates two problems associated with simple difference scores: measurement errors that can obscure construct relationships and the confounding effects of honest trait elevations that constrain correlations with explanatory variables. Application of true change models to faking research are demonstrated across two studies. The first focuses on how associations between faking behavior and explanatory variables such as cognitive ability can be accurately assessed. The second illustrated how a second-order factor can be added to explain the covariance between change factors associated with the conceptualization that faking acts like common method variance. Results from both studies suggest that separate change factors for each trait are important to model fit.

10. On the Use of Implicit Association Tests in the Measurement of Personality Traits

Siers, B., & Christiansen, N. D.

Limitations of self-report trait measures have encouraged research into alternative methods of assessment. This study evaluated the validity of one alternative, Implicit Association Tests (IATs) of personality traits. Participants ($n=200$) completed self-report and IAT measures of extraversion, conscientiousness, stability, a self-report measure of social desirability, and control IAT measures. Peer ratings of traits and performance criteria (supervisor ratings of job performance, academic performance) were also solicited. Compared to self-report measures, IAT measures were less correlated with social desirability. Results also suggested low convergence between IAT and self-report trait measures, and adequate evidence of discrimination. IAT trait measures of extraversion ($r = .14$) and conscientiousness ($r = .12$) predicted job performance better than their self-report counterparts, but overall criterion validity results were mixed. Cognitive ability and implicit self-esteem both explained significant portions of the method variance expressed by IAT measures. These results do not endorse the use of IAT trait measures in applied assessment settings. However, several promising results suggest continued test development and further evaluation.

11. Personality Judgments Based on Resumé Content and Style

Burns, G., & Christiansen, N. D.

This study examined how the personality of the applicants impacts hiring judgments through their resumé. Resumés ($N=37$) were collected from individuals who were applying for jobs requiring an MBA and were coded with regard to features related to both content and style. Each resumé was evaluated in terms of how hireable the person described would be for a managerial position by 5 to 8 individuals with experience making such judgments. The results showed that applicants who were higher in Extraversion ($\beta = .46$) and Conscientiousness ($\beta = .37$) were evaluated as more hireable based on their resumés. Applicants higher in extraversion were more likely to provide additional details about their education, social activities, and exciting hobbies. Those higher in conscientiousness created more attractive resumés and listed more leadership positions, but were not more likely to report sustained work experience or academic success. Additional cues on the resumés that were related to more favorable evaluations but not applicants' personality were also identified.

12. Self-efficacy in the Workplace: Linking personality to domain specific efficacy beliefs

Burns, G., & Christiansen, N. D.

Although it is well established that personality is related to job success, less is known about the mechanisms whereby personality affects more specific work behaviors. Based on a social-cognitive approach to personality, the role of domain-specific efficacy beliefs were examined in two studies. Study 1 developed a measure of expectations about success in 10 different domains of common work activities. Expectancy ratings were obtained for 113 individuals along with self- and peer-ratings of personality. Results showed that predictable relationships emerged, with the traits of the Five-Factor Model being important determinants of domain-specific efficacy beliefs. Study 2 focused on expectations about activities related to conscientiousness as the link between personality and performance across jobs. Results ($N=97$) confirmed the proposed relationships and found that efficacy beliefs about trait-relevant tasks functioned as a mediator linking conscientious and supervisor ratings of performance. Implications for personality assessment in organizations and the development of predictive hypotheses about personality-based job requirements are discussed.

13. Assessment of Personality Using Situational Judgment Tests

Labrador, J., Christiansen, N. D., & Coaster, J.

A problem with traditional personality assessments is that the statements presented to respondents may be transparent and easy to fake. It has been suggested that alternate methods of assessing personality which are more resistant to faking should be developed. Situational judgment tests (SJTs) present individuals with a series of work-related situations and ask respondents to choose from a number of behavioral options. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the feasibility of using an open-ended SJT format to measure personality. Three different instructional sets (open-ended, behavioral tendency, and knowledge) were used. A total of 378 participants were randomly assigned to either an honest condition or applicant condition. Results found that the behavioral tendency and open ended formats were more related to personality than the knowledge format. Under applicant instructions, the behavioral tendency and open-ended instructional sets were more susceptible to faking than the knowledge format. Implications for future research are discussed.