AN INVESTIGATION OF IDEAL APPLICANT SCHEMAS AS AN EXPLANATION OF
APPLICANT FAKING BEHAVIOR ON PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

John A. Coaster

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Department of Psychology

Central Michigan University
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Dissertation Committee:

| | |
|---|---|
| Neil Christiansen, Ph.D. | Committee Chair |
| Kyunghee Han, Ph.D. | Faculty Member |
| Kevin Love, Ph.D. | Faculty Member |
| November 21, 2011 | Date of Defense |
| Roger Coles, Ed.D. | Dean<br>College of Graduate Studies |
| March 3, 2012 | Approved by the<br>College of Graduate Studies |

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF IDEAL APPLICANT SCHEMAS AS AN EXPLANATION OF
APPLICANT FAKING BEHAVIOR ON PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

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Applicant faking behavior on personality assessments is one of the greatest concerns when considering the use of personality in personnel selection. Relatively little is known about how and when applicants are likely to fake. Recently, many conceptual models of applicant faking behavior have been proposed, but they neglect the cognitive processes that affect faking behavior. One such cognitive process is the formulation of Ideal Applicant Schemas. This model proposes that applicants have the trait profile of the ideal applicant for the job in mind when responding to personality items, and then attempt to emulate this profile. The current study investigates the feasibility of Ideal Applicant Schemas as explanatory cognitive processes guiding faking behavior. Results indicate the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas. Simulated applicants holding Ideal Applicant Schemas that are higher than their honest trait elevation tend to manipulate scores in the direction of their Ideal Applicant Schema. The same goes for simulated applicants holding Ideal Applicant Schemas that are lower than their honest trait elevation; they tend to lower their scores. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Interest in the use of personality traits in personnel selection has grown exponentially in recent decades, as many studies have shown that personality can be a valid predictor of organizational outcomes if the proper precautions are taken. For example, validity can be increased by simply linking traits to job-relevant behaviors a priori (Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). Even though personality tests have shown great utility, some practitioners and researchers shy away from them due to the perception that applicants are able to inflate their scores when motivated to do so.

Faking on personality tests in motivating contexts is a pressing issue for practitioners, and one of the greatest hurdles for researchers. Research has shown that applicants can fake, and about 30 to 50% of applicants actually do fake their responses (Griffith, Chmielowski, & Yoshita, 2007). The prevalence of applicant faking gives rise to a host of issues. Faking has an effect on the criterion-related validity of personality assessments by changing the rank-order of applicants, in turn causing errors in selection decisions. These errors in selection decisions arise not only from the changes in rank order between honest and faked personality trait elevations, but also because these changes likely apply to predicted on-the-job performance as well. Thus far, faking cannot reliably be detected nor corrected for. Many methods have been proposed to minimize the effects of faking, but most are simply not practical or effective. Instead of focusing on minimizing the effects of faking, perhaps researchers should attempt to gain a better understanding the faking process.

Models of applicant faking have appeared in recent years (Snell, Sydell, & Lueke, 1999; McFarland & Ryan, 2000). Most of these models focus on the applicant's ability and

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motivation to fake. These models are primarily useful for understanding individual differences in faking behavior, but not the cognitive process underlying the phenomenon. All of these models have various flaws associated with them. One of the latest models of applicant faking behavior includes a decision tree of the cognitive process, but even this model makes some bold assumptions and has not yet been empirically tested (Goffin & Boyd, 2009).

Other lines of research have focused on the cognitions of the applicant during the faking process. It was generally believed that applicants attempt to increase their scores on relevant traits, but recent findings suggest a more complex process (Coaster & Christiansen, 2009). The purpose of the current study is to provide evidence for the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas of personality. Ideal Applicant Schemas are defined as the cognitive representation that an applicant holds about a successful employee in the job for which they are applying.

Ideal Applicant Schemas depart from previous models of faking in a couple of key ways. First, the importance of the trait is irrelevant to the amount of faking. This means that applicants will attempt to manipulate their score on every trait measured, not just traits that are job-relevant. Second, Ideal Applicant Schemas posit an entire trait profile that the applicant then tries to emulate (Coaster & Christiansen, 2009). This is an important point because it assumes applicants can both increase their scores on traits that are necessary for the job, and decrease their scores on unnecessary traits. If Ideal Applicant Schemas are indeed used by applicants when faking, the complex process of faking can be elucidated in hopes of mitigating its occurrence and negative effects.
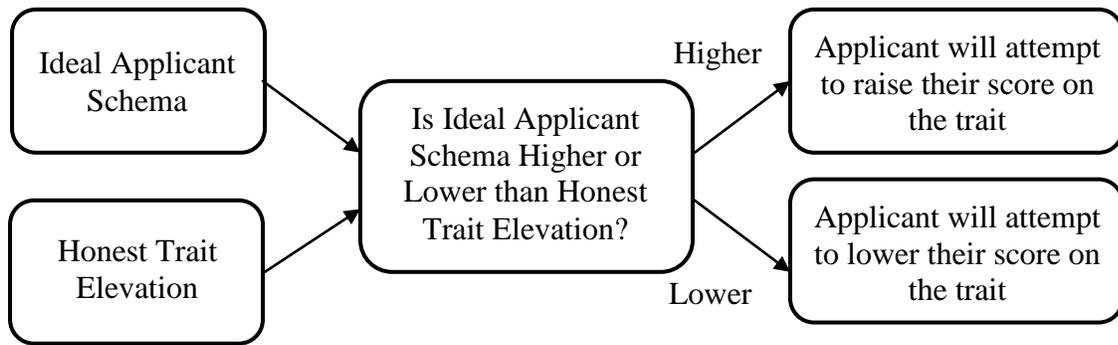
Figure 1. *Conceptual Model of Ideal Applicant Schemas and Faking Behavior*

Figure 1 depicts how Ideal Applicant Schemas affect faking behavior. The applicant's honest trait elevation is compared to their Ideal Applicant Schema. If the applicant believes that the ideal employee for the position would have a higher trait elevation than their honest level, they will attempt to inflate their score. In contrast, if an applicant perceives the ideal trait elevation to be below their honest elevation, then the applicant will attempt to lower their score on that trait.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Brief History of Personality and Personnel Selection

Research on personality traits as predictors of organizational outcomes has had a very

interesting history. The first review of existing literature was conducted by Guion and Gottier in

1965. Their review concluded that personality traits, at that time, should not be used to make

selection decisions. Although the body of research at that time included few studies of suspect

quality, these conclusions stifled research on personality and organizational outcomes for

decades. All of this changed in the early 1990s with the advancement of techniques for

quantitatively reviewing extant research.

Two meta-analyses published in 1991 reignited the study of personality as a predictor of

job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tett, et al., 1991). Barrick and Mount (1991) found

that Conscientiousness is the best predictor of job performance across jobs, with an uncorrected

mean validity of .13. This value is often cited as evidence that personality is at best, a weak

predictor of job performance and should not be utilized in personnel selection contexts (e.g.

Morgeson, et al. 2007). Tett, Jackson, and Rothstein (1991), however, found that other traits are

better predictors of job performance when the requirements of the job are taken into account.

Further, validity increases when a priori hypotheses are made concerning which traits are job-

related. This study has fueled the proponents of personality testing, as meaningful validities can

be obtained when personality inventories are implemented correctly.

Another reason for increased attention directed toward personality measurement prior to

1990 was the development of the Five-Factor Model (FFM; Goldberg, 1990). The five broad

factors are Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. These five broad personality traits subsume other, narrow traits. This taxonomy revolutionized personality assessment by unifying the operational definitions of traits and providing a common language with which human behavior could be described.

*Modern Controversy*

In 2007, a series of articles published in *Personnel Psychology* gained attention for elucidating many of the issues and criticisms faced by practitioners who use personality inventories, and for researchers who study personality in organizations (Morgeson, et al., 2007a, Tett & Christiansen, 2007; Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, & Judge, 2007; Morgeson, et al., 2007b). The debate began at a panel discussion at the meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology on the topic of faking in personality testing, but expanded to include the utility of personality testing in general. There are a number of issues regarding the use of personality assessment in personnel selection contexts that must be discussed in more detail.

One of the major arguments presented by Mogeson et al. (2007a) is that personality tests have very low validity in the prediction of overall job performance. This conclusion is based on the results of raw, uncorrected mean validities from various meta-analyses. Tett and Christiansen (2007) argue this conclusion by asserting that meta-analyses ignore many vital details about how personality assessments are, or should be utilized for organizational decision-making. They cite situational specificity, bidirectionality, confirmatory versus exploratory research designs, the use of personality-oriented job analysis, broad versus narrow trait measures, and univariate versus multivariate methods of prediction as possible explanations for the underestimations of true validity found in meta-analyses.

Issues in the Use of Personality Traits to Predict Job Performance

Situational specificity is the idea that certain traits predict performance best in certain situations. This point was first made in the Guion and Gottier (1964) review, stating "…in some situations, for some purposes, some personality measures can offer helpful predictions" (pg. 159). The article then explains how situational specificity is a problem of greater importance to personality than to other constructs. Meta-analyses often neglect situational specificity, computing validity across all jobs (e.g. Barrick & Mount, 1991). Some have categorized jobs with similar features (e.g. Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991) and have found higher validity coefficients for job-relevant traits.

Another issue that most meta-analyses do not attend to is the bidirectionality of the validity coefficients (Tett, Jackson, Rothstein & Reddon, 1999). If the validity of personality is situationally specific, then it can be expected that the same trait will have a positive correlation with performance in some jobs, and a negative correlation in others. If all jobs with positive and negative correlations are averaged (as in meta-analysis), the mean validity coefficient will undoubtedly be closer to zero than if the absolute value of the validity had been recorded. It should be noted that using the absolute value of validity coefficients only makes conceptual sense when combining the validity of personality across many jobs. If one were to meta-analyze the validity of certain personality traits for a certain job, it would no longer be advised to use the absolute value, as each selected trait should have an a priori hypothesis as to the direction of the relationship with the criterion.

When a study uses some theoretical basis for making a priori hypotheses about what traits will predict performance, the study is employing a confirmatory design (Tett et al., 1991). Many studies, both published and unpublished, do not make such hypotheses. These studies are

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exploratory in nature, as they usually measure all traits and determine which the best predictors of performance post-hoc are. Tett, Jackson, and Rothstein (1991) used this distinction as a moderator in their meta-analysis, and found that confirmatory studies yield higher validities, on average, than exploratory studies. This finding lends evidence that personality is situationally specific in the prediction of job performance, and further, the traits that are most likely to predict performance are identifiable before the assessments are administered.

Personality-oriented job analysis is one technique that allows practitioners to specify which personality traits are most job-related, and will therefore predict successful performance. Research regarding personality-oriented job analysis is lacking compared to the number of studies that predict performance without the aid of this technique. Despite this lack of research, the preliminary evidence for personality-oriented job analysis is promising. Tett et al. (1999) found the highest validity coefficients reported in studies where a personality-oriented job analysis had been conducted. Perhaps the most well-known instrument for conducting personality-oriented job analyses is the Personality-Related Position Requirements Form (PPRF, Raymark, Schmit, & Guion, 1997). This instrument was used to analyze 260 different jobs. It was determined that the PPRF can reliably differentiate among jobs based on the personality traits required to perform the jobs successfully.

The breadth of the personality traits measured may also impact the criterion-related validity of a personality assessment. This has been shown by Jenkins and Griffith (2004), whom used a personality-based job analysis instrument to evaluate applicants for an Accounting job. These applicants were also given the 16PF. The study then compared the criterion-related validity of broad FFM factors (computed from the 16PF) to the 16 narrow trait scales. They found that the narrow trait scales yielded higher criterion-related validity than the broad

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personality factors.  The majority of meta-analyses to date have used broad personality factors as predictors of performance, which may cause an underestimation of the true validity of the narrow facets of personality.

Personality traits are rarely used to predict performance individually, as they are often combined with other traits, and usually other measures when selecting candidates for employment (Converse, Peterson, & Griffith, 2009).  Current meta-analyses only estimate univariate correlations between individual personality traits and job performance.  These values are underestimates of the amount of variance in performance accounted for by all personality traits, and neglect the incremental variance that personality traits add over and above other assessments.  Further, personality scales show relatively low intercorrelations compared to those among other assessments (e.g. mechanical reasoning and verbal ability measures likely correlate higher with one another than Neuroticism with Openness to Experience).  This relates to a higher multiple correlations when personality scales are treated as a set of predictors, as compared to other measures treated in the same manner.

Taken together, these issues suggest that personality assessment has not yet reached its potential utility for use in personnel selection.  This point is echoed by the complexity of measurement and other factors that lead researchers to underestimate the true validity of personality in the prediction of job performance.  Personality should not be studied and scrutinized according to the frameworks of other assessments (e.g. cognitive ability), as personality traits are multidimensional and do not always abide by the 'higher is always better' paradigm that has dominated ability testing for selection.  These issues allow researchers and practitioners to carefully examine the utility of personality in selection contexts when it is

assumed that personality is measured accurately, which may or may not be true when applicants are motivated to distort their responses.

<center>Faking in Personality Assessments</center>

There are several basic questions that must be answered in order to make an informed decision as to the utility of researching applicant faking on personality inventories.  The initial question concerns the prevalence of faking in applicant contexts.  Also, how does faking influence the construct and criterion-related validity of the test?  Further, how can we identify when applicants are faking?  Finally, how can practitioners prevent faking?  These basic research questions lead to a final query: does faking matter?

*Can and Do Applicants Fake?*

There are a number of ways to determine if individuals are capable of inflating their scores on personality inventories in selection contexts.  The two most common approaches are the experimental manipulation (creating a faking condition via instructions) or comparing applicant to incumbent samples of actual applicants (Tett & Christiansen, 2007).  The experimental method of inducing faking has shown repeatedly that it is indeed possible for individuals to inflate certain trait scores when instructed to do so.  It has also been shown that incumbent samples score higher than applicant samples on personality assessments.  These findings indicate that individuals are capable of faking.

The prevalence and severity of faking has also been thoroughly researched.  The prevalence of faking applicant contexts is estimated to be 30 to 50% (Griffith, et al., 2007).  This presents a major problem to practitioners, as faking likely causes changes in the rank-order of true-scores of the applicants, which in turn causes errors in selection decisions.  In order for

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faking to not affect selection decisions, either all applicants would fake the same amount or none would fake at all, thereby leaving the true-score rank order of applicants intact.  Recently, a couple of interesting techniques have been employed to examine the prevalence of faking.  Donovan, Dwight, and Hurtz (2003) used the randomized response technique (to encourage anonymity in responses) and found that about a third of applicants report some form faking.

Robie, Brown, and Beaty (2007) used a verbal protocol analysis to determine what individuals who were motivated to fake were thinking when responding to a personality questionnaire.  This required participants (who were vying for a $100 prize given to the highest scorer) to verbalize the first thoughts that came to mind when responding to the personality measure.  Of the 12 participants, three distinct response sets were evident from a qualitative analysis of the verbal behavior.  Some individuals did not even consider faking (honest responders), others exaggerated their true item responses to appear more favorable (slight fakers), and others completely misrepresented themselves in order obtain the highest score possible on the assessment (extreme fakers).  This study is notable for a couple of reasons.  First, it shows that with the same instructions (and likely similar motivation to fake), some individuals simply respond honestly while others fake to the best of their ability.  Second, this study sheds some light on the cognitive process involved in responding to a personality item when faking.  This point will be expanded further in a later section.

A meta-analysis of the faking literature was conducted in 1999 (Viswesvaran & Ones, 1999).  This study compared within- and between-subject faking studies, as well as instructions to fake good versus fake bad.  In general, individuals were found to enhance their scores on all traits when instructed to do so.  This was most apparent in the within-subject studies.  Participants are also able to fake more when instructed to fake bad.  The authors suggest that

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within-subject faking designs result in a more accurate estimate of faking, since the standard deviation of the observed effect sizes was smaller than in between-subject designs. All of this research taken together suggests that individuals, students or applicants, are able to fake on personality inventories in order to enhance their scores.

*How Does Faking Affect Validity?*

Practitioners are most concerned with the criterion-related validity of personality tests, since that is what determines how accurate the decisions based on these scores will be in predicting subsequent performance on the job. There are a number of ways to study how faking affects the criterion-related validity of personality measures. The most prevalent method is comparing samples differing in motivation to fake, such as applicants and incumbents (applicants are more motivated to perform well on the test because their livelihood depends on their test performance). In a comprehensive review of literature comparing applicant and incumbent samples, Hough (1998) found that the criterion-related validity of personality in predicting job performance in incumbent samples was double that found in applicant samples.

A recent field study by Griffith, Chmielowski, and Yoshita (2007) administered a conscientiousness measure to applicants, and then administered the test to the same individuals post-hire in both honest and fake good conditions. In this design, the same subject is expected to be motivated to fake in the applicant condition, making it possible to compare the rank-order of applicants under all three conditions. They found that applicants scored highest when faking good, but also scored higher in the applicant condition than in the honest condition. They also examined the rank-order of applicants. In their study, if the top ten candidates were selected in the applicant condition, six of those ten candidates would not have been hired if their honest

scores were used to make the decision.  Further, in their sample, if a 10% selection ratio were used, 66% of the selected applicants would have 'faked their way in', meaning their honest scores would not have gotten them hired.  The results of this study indicate that faking drastically changes the rank-order of applicants, which in turn decreases the criterion-related validity of the assessment.

It should also be noted that some researchers argue that faking does not affect the criterion-related validity of personality assessments.  These researchers site studies in which social desirability scales were used to operationalize faking behavior.  Social desirability scales have been shown to have poor construct validity and are not particularly immune to faking in and of themselves, as applicants can be coached to avoid being detected (see Burns & Christiansen, 2006 for a review of this topic).  The only studies in which validity is enhanced (or not attenuated) under faking conditions occur when the personality test is very difficult to fake.  This may involve the use of subtle items or forced-choice personality formats.  In such cases, it is posited that cognitive ability is driving faking, as only intelligent individuals are able to inflate their scores on such 'difficult' tests.  Therefore, the inflation of criterion-related validity may not be due to faking, but rather the relationship between faking and cognitive ability, since cognitive ability is often correlated with the outcome of interest (usually job performance).

In cases where cognitive ability is required to fake a personality test successfully, the construct validity of the test is in question under faking conditions.  If personality traits are posited to be related to the criterion, but only those with above average intelligence are scoring well enough to be selected for the job (via better faking), the test is no longer measuring personality, but something else.

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*Detecting Faking Behavior*

Embedding social desirability (SD) scales within personality measures is the most common method of identifying faking (Burns & Christiansen, 2006). SD scales are typically comprised of items in which the base rate for the behavior being rated is very low in the normal population. It is assumed that if a respondent endorses many of such items, they are manipulating their score artificially, because the probability of one individual endorsing many such items is quite small. This does raise concerns when considering what SD scales actually measure. Further, since response verification is infeasible, there is no way to identify if an individual is faking, or if they are actually that high in the selected trait. The scores obtained from SD scales are often used to correct scores in an attempt to replicate honest scores (Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999), but even corrections cannot recreate the honest rank-order of participants.

Score adjustments based upon social desirability scales are common in practice and attempt to reflect true trait elevations as if no faking had occurred. Ellingson et al. (1999) studied the utility of this method of reducing the effects of faking. Scenarios involving different selection ratios were analyzed to see if the rank-order of individuals in the applicant condition would be the same as the rankings in the honest condition when corrected according to the SD measure. The correction did decrease scores in those applicants that were faking, but the rank order of the corrected scores was different from the honest ordering. This finding suggests that corrected scores do not accurately recreate honest scores. To further investigate the changes in the variance/covariance structure, they conducted principal components analyses on the honest, faked, and corrected scores independently. Eigenvalue patterns suggest a one-factor solution for both faked and corrected scores, but a more complex solution for the honest scores. The one-

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factor solution is likely due to the variance attributable to faking. Since the corrected scores also reflected a one-factor solution, the variance due to faking was likely not suppressed.

It seems intuitive that faking takes time. When faking, it is thought that the respondent chooses their true response, then identifies the most desirable response, and then decides which response to endorse. This would likely take longer than simply choosing the true response. Vasilopoulos, Cucina, and McElreath (2005) support this model, as they found slower response latencies when warnings were administered, likely adding complexity to the decisions being made. However, results are mixed concerning this model of responding in the current research. Holden, Wood, and Tomashewski (2001) provide evidence that faking is a more primitive cognitive process and thus takes less time to activate. There is a third perspective on response latencies that posits an interactive effect. This view holds that congruence between the desirability of the item and the respondent's implicit motive determines response latencies, such that faking occurs faster for desirable items, and slower for undesirable items (Holden, Kroner, Fekken, & Popham, 1992).

*Minimizing the Effects of Faking*

The majority of attempts to minimize faking behavior preventatively focus on the test itself. The use of subtle items has often been proposed as a method to make faking more difficult. Subtle items "lack an obvious substantive link between test item content and its underlying construct" (Holden & Jackson, 1979). Item subtlety is often thought to be the inverse of face validity, however, they are independent constructs. Face validity is the perceived relevance of test content to the specific situational context. In personnel psychology, this can be

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thought of as the job-relatedness of the test, subtlety, on the other hand, concerns the trait being measured, regardless of the situation.

Subtle items have been suspect with regards to validity estimates. Holden and Jackson (1979 & 1981) studied the use of subtle items in faking contexts. They have shown that faking is reduced, but validity estimates are still greater under honest conditions as compared to faking conditions. These results provide evidence that subtle items can still measure personality to some extent, but are not capturing the same amount of trait variance as more obvious items. This argument can logically be combated by formulating a longer test of subtle items. This would yield the same accuracy in the estimation of true trait elevation, while maintaining resistance against faking.

Warning respondents of faking identification, response verification, and the consequences of faking have been shown to impact the amount of faking. Dwight and Donovan (2003 ) reviewed previous literature and conducted an experiment to investigate the impact of each type of warning on subsequent faking behavior. Upon review of the literature, they found warnings to have a minimal effect on faking, finding a standardized mean difference of .23 between scores of warned and unwarned applicants. Participants were unwarned, warned of faker identification, warned of the consequences of faking, or warned of both identification and consequences. Not surprisingly, the condition in which participants were warned of both identification and consequences showed the strongest reduction in faking.

The greatest amount of research concerning preventative methods of reducing faking has investigated different item formats. Single-Stimulus (SS) items are rated on a Likert-type scale, where scores are simply summed to yield the scale score. Forced-Choice (FC) items consist of two or more statements (stems) that are equated on the level of social desirability. Each set of

stems comprises one item. The stems measure different traits and the respondent must choose between them regarding which stem is most similar or least similar to their self-perception. The number of stems in each item can vary, along with how the respondent answers them. For example, a simple FC item would contain two stems and ask the respondent to endorse the stem which is most like them. A more complicated FC item would consist of four stems and ask the respondent to choose to stem that is most like them, and also the stem that is least like them. Furthermore, stems can range from single-word adjectives, to descriptive statements with various shades of meaning. It is assumed that FC items more accurately capture true trait levels, because of the match in social desirability (Converse et al., 2006).

The use of Forced-Choice item formats has long been suggested as a method to decrease the amount of faking on non-cognitive measures (Heggestad, Morrison, Reeve, & McCloy, 2006). Reducing the amount that individual's are able to fake is desirable, as the results of the test are assumed to be more reflective of actual trait elevations. Faking behavior is typically operationalized as the difference between scores obtained honestly and when the individual is motivated to fake. When studying the affect of FC items on faking, the difference in scores obtained from normative measures are compared against the FC measure. Early studies discredited the use of FC items because applicants are still able to increase their scores when motivated to do so. Recent research, however, has focused more on the reduction in faking, rather than the eradication of it. Recent studies typically find that FC measures can only be faked one-third to one-quarter of the amount found in SS measures (Christiansen et al., 2005; Jackson, Wroblewski, & Ashton, 2000; Martin, Bowen, & Hunt, 2002; Vasilopoulos et al., 2006).

Criterion related validity is the central focus of research concerning testing in personnel selection contexts. Recent research has supported the use of Forced-Choice measures in increasing the prediction of relevant organizational outcomes. Christiansen et al. (2005, study 2) examined the prediction of job performance using both FC and SS measures, further, they also explored the effect of faking on the validity of both measures. Their results indicate that criterion related validity is diminished when SS measures are used and faking behavior is present, however, for the FC format, validity increased when taken in an applicant condition. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is that FC items require greater cognitive ability to fake effectively as compared to SS items. Cognitive ability is also highly correlated with job performance, causing an enhanced correlation between faked FC scores and job performance. Although the variance attributable to FC personality measures may be saturated with constructs unrelated to personality, they do still predict job performance better than SS measures.

Similar findings are also found for other self-report, non-cognitive measures. Jackson et al. (2000, study 2) studied faking on an integrity test and the effect of item format on the prediction of counterproductive work behavior. The second study investigated the differences in validity between FC and SS measures under an honest condition as compared to a simulated applicant instruction set. The difference in the correlations between conditions was then analyzed. Both forms of the dependability scale performed equally well when predicting counterproductive work behaviors in the honest condition (.48 for SS, .41 for FC). This result is desirable and expected if in fact the scales are measuring the same construct. The interesting finding occurs in the applicant condition, where the validity estimate dropped to .18 for the SS measure, but only fell to .36 for the FC measure of dependability. These results suggest that the

validity of an instrument can be doubled when FC items are used, as compared to traditional SS items.

One other method of reducing the effects of faking has examined different scoring schemes. Option keying is a different way to score continuous scale items, such that the extreme ends of the scale are no longer the most and least desirable. For example, if an item is scored on a five-point Likert-scale, each point on the scale would be given a different point value upon option keying. Depending on the item and construct being measured, the options could be keyed 0, 1, 0, -1, 0, or 0, -1, 0, 1, 0, as opposed to the common method of additive scoring in which the scale points would be awarded 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. This method has yet to be studied concerning personality tests, but it shows promising results when applied to biodata scoring (Kluger, Reilly, & Russell, 1991).

Although reactive methods of coping with faking may result in "quick fix" solutions to complicated problems, research has yet to uncover a flawless approach to the problem. If every individual faked to the same extent, it would be easy to correct for, but this is not the case. Research has also failed to accurately measure the amount that individuals fake, resulting in defective corrections.

*Does Faking Matter?*

Faking behavior has a very complex relationship with validity and selection decisions. Some researchers, practitioners, and even developers of personality assessment believe that faking behavior is not a concern (Morgeson, et al., 2007). If this argument is made, a distinction must be drawn between self-disclosure, where factual information about oneself is shared, and self-presentation, where the individual responds as they wish to be perceived by others.

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Researchers positing that faking does not matter have the belief that self-presentation is a good thing for a potential employee to exhibit. In this sense, all on-the-job interactions are assumed to be self-presentations of some sort. Therefore, the better an applicant can present themselves on the personality assessment, the better they will be able to present themselves in a positive light to coworkers and clients (Hogan, Barrett, & Hogan, 2007).

This view posits that faking and self-presentation are one in the same, and further, that an individual who can fake a personality assessment can also 'fake' interactions with clients and coworkers to be an effective employee. These assumptions raise concerns for a couple of reasons. First, literature on emotional labor (acting incongruently to how one feels at work) shows that people whom have to misrepresent their true feelings and emotions have lower job satisfaction than those that do not have to portray feelings that are false (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005). Just because an individual is good at faking, does not mean they enjoy doing it on a daily basis. This in turn could cause high rates of turnover because an individual would fake their personality to get the job, then either act incongruently to how they actually feel and leave the job due to dissatisfaction, or they would portray trait elevations that the organization would find undesirable and the employee would be terminated.

The second terminal flaw of this paradigm is the complete disregard for construct validity in personality assessment. If self-presentation is a desirable skill for an employee to possess, why not measure self-presentation skills instead of personality? The extant research is quite compelling in that something other than personality is being measured in situations where applicants fake (Vasilopoulos et al., 2006). Some studies have shown that criterion-related validity increases under faking conditions, likely due to the correlation between cognitive ability and job performance. This becomes extremely problematic because not all applicants fake on

personality assessments. If only the individuals who fake are selected, the organization is likely selecting only the intelligent and dishonest individuals, when in reality, they would like to employ the intelligent honest applicants. If faking does not matter, should we instruct applicants to fake in order to assess self-presentation skills?

The belief that faking does not matter in personality assessment for personnel selection also disregards some of the primary reasons for implementing personality assessments. Personality tests result in less adverse impact than measures of cognitive ability (Newman & Lyon, 2009). If one chooses to measure self-presentation skills (or using an easily faked personality test), this advantage over traditional ability testing is negated. Faked personality scores likely show the same amount of adverse impact as cognitive ability measures, as it takes an adequate level of cognitive ability to fake successfully (Vasilopoulos, et al., 2006).

In sum, faking on personality assessments in personnel selection contexts is a viable topic of study for numerous reasons. First, applicants do fake personality assessments, causing errors in selection decisions. Second, faking does affect the construct and criterion-related validity of personality in the prediction of job performance and other organizational outcomes. Third, there are many ways to reduce faking behavior, but very few (if any) good ways to detect faking behavior posteriori. Finally, ignoring that faking is problematic can cause a host of problems, not the least of which is negating the qualities of personality assessment that make it a good alternative to ability testing. Now that faking has been deemed a fruitful topic of study, one must determine the most effective conceptual model of faking behavior and how to empirically investigate it.

Understanding Faking Behavior

There have been a handful of conceptual models proposed in recent years that attempt to explain faking behavior. The first model of applicant faking was proposed by Snell, Sydell, and Lueke (1999). They posit two main factors that contribute to faking behavior, ability to fake and motivation to fake. Ability to fake is defined as the individual's capacity to distort their responses. This can be influenced by individual difference variables such as general mental ability, experiential factors such as previous personality tests they have seen or practiced faking, and test characteristics like item subtlety and transparency. Motivation to fake is defined as the willingness to fake. This is influenced by such factors as demographics, disposition, perceptual factors, and context factors. Perceptual factors mainly refer to the perception of consequences or response verification. There are a few limitations to this model of applicant faking. First, the model has never been empirically tested. Second, it accounts for faking at the applicant level of analysis, but neglects informing the item level. Lastly, it is unlikely that demographics influence the faking process.

To further the conceptual understanding of applicant faking, McFarland and Ryan (2000) proposed a model of faking behavior which included interactions among many antecedents. They posited beliefs toward faking to influence one's intention to fake, which would then influence faking. In addition, ability and opportunity to fake were hypothesized to moderate the relationship between intention to fake and faking behavior. In this model, beliefs toward faking include morals, values, religious beliefs, and personality. Ability to fake includes item transparency, general mental ability and job knowledge. Opportunity to fake is defined as the difference between the honest trait elevation and the maximum point of the scale.

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This model accounts for a number of interesting variables. It includes job knowledge as an indicator of one's ability to fake. This is intuitive, as the more one knows about the job they are applying for, the better they can emulate (or at least identify) the most desirable traits. Also, opportunity to fake is included to account for differences in faking due to restriction in range. For example, an individual who is low in Openness to Experience in an honest context has a greater margin to improve their score than an individual whose honest elevation is quite high. The applicant with high trait elevation has less 'room' to improve. This model was partially tested using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a unifying framework, but the model was only partially supported (McFarland & Ryan, 2006). This model also fails to acknowledge the cognitive processes that likely influence faking behavior. One's knowledge or perceptions of which traits are important for the job would not be relevant according to this model.

Mueller-Hanson, Heggestad, and Thornton (2006) proposed a model of faking that included a number of antecedents to one's intention to fake, which then leads to faking behavior. These antecedents included perceptions of the situation, willingness to fake, ability to fake, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Perceptions of the situation are organized into three categories: belief in the importance of faking, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. In this model, ability to fake is defined as the knowledge of how to obtain a desirable score. This is likely related to cognitive ability and item transparency. Willingness to fake was characterized by three constructs in their model: Machiavellianism, lack of rule-consciousness, and self-monitoring. It should be noted that conscientiousness and emotional stability were hypothesized to have a negative relationship with intention to fake. They conducted a within-subject faking study and tested their model using structural equations modeling. This resulted in partial support, as perceptions of the situation, conscientiousness, and emotional stability all

yielded significant loadings on faking intentions.  Also, intention to fake was significantly

related to faking behavior.

Building upon these models, Goffin and Boyd (2009) composed a general model of

faking behavior.  This model is quite different from previous models, as perceived ability to fake

for each individual item predicts one's motivation to fake the response for that item, which in

turn determines the faked item response.  Individual differences and contextual antecedents are

included as indicators of both perceived ability to fake an item and motivation to fake an item.

For ability to fake, individual differences consist of personality traits, skills, abilities, and

experience.  Contextual antecedents consist of perceived opportunity to fake and the perceived

knowledge of the job and the personality traits relevant to that job.  For motivation to fake an

item, individual differences include personality traits and moral code, while contextual

antecedents include the perception that faking will result in negative consequences and the

perceived need to fake the item response.  This model is unique in that it accounts for faking at

the item level.  This assumes each item as a new decision to fake, with different contextual

variables influencing faking behavior.

In an extension of their general model, Goffin and Boyd (2009) also devised a decision

tree of faking behavior.  This decision tree represents the cognitive process of faking an

individual item.  There are six questions that one must answer to determine if an item will be

faked or not. The first question concerns whether or not faking would violate the moral code of

the individual.  If it does, the individual would not attempt to fake the item.  The second question

concerns the job-relevance of the topic of the item.  If the item is perceived to be irrelevant to the

job, faking will not occur on that item.  The third question asks if the behavior or tendency

referred to in the item characteristic of the applicant.  Either answer to this question (yes or no)

will lead to the next question concerning whether or not the behavior or tendency in the item would be considered advantageous on the job.

If the applicant answers no to this question after determining that the topic of the item is not characteristic of him/her, they will respond honestly. Alternatively, if the applicant believes the item is characteristic of them and advantageous to the job, they will also respond honestly. In the case that the applicant believes the item is characteristic of them, but not advantageous for the job, or when the item is not characteristic but is advantageous, will the applicant progress to the next question.

The penultimate question states "would faking my response result in me not being hired?" This question refers to response verification or warnings of faking detection. If the applicant believes there is no way to determine if he/she is faking, then they will progress to the final question: "Am I capable of demonstrating the desired behavior or tendency on the job?" If yes, the item will be faked in order to increase the chances of being hired. If they feel that they cannot portray the behavior or tendency on the job, the applicant will respond honestly.

The decision tree model poses a number of interesting assumptions. According to the model, warnings of response verification (question 5) should eliminate faking entirely. Research suggests that faking is reduced, but not eliminated by warnings of verification. The model also proposes that individuals are genuinely interested in reflecting the personality they portray in the assessment when they are eventually hired. This assumption seems far-fetched, as the goal of responding in the application process is to secure employment, not to protect against termination. The primary contribution of this model is that item-level responding is the unit of analysis, not simply the inflation of scores on an entire scale. Recent advancements in Item Response Theory (IRT) make it possible to investigate faking at the item level, but this model has yet to be

empirically investigated.  The assumption that faking takes place at the item level also implies some sort of cognitive framework to decide which behaviors are relevant and desirable for the job.

## Ideal Applicant Schemas

It seems intuitive that applicants would have an ideal profile in mind when attempting to manipulate their scores on personality assessments.  The first empirical evidence of this appeared in the early 1990s when Schmit and Ryan (1993) used confirmatory factor analysis to investigate the measurement equivalence of the NEO in applicant and student samples.  The five factor model (as hypothesized) fit the observed data in the student sample, but a six factor solution fit the applicant data significantly better than a five factor model.  The authors suggest that the sixth factor in the applicant sample represents an "ideal employee" factor that fundamentally changes how applicants respond to personality inventories.

Pattern approaches to studying faking on personality tests may shed some light on the existence of cognitive schemas.  Martin, Bowen, and Hunt (2002) operationalized faking as the agreement between the faked score and the individuals' ratings of trait importance after reading a description of the job.  They found that simulated applicants do actually attempt to emulate the profile of traits according to how important each trait is perceived to be for the job.  Further, they found that faking behavior can be detected by investigating the distribution of response option choices on individual items.

These findings are consistent with the concept of Implicit Job Theories of personality as proposed by Christiansen, Burns, and Montgomery (2005).  Implicit Job Theories are defined as stereotypes associated with applicants' beliefs about the behaviors involved in performing a job

successfully and the personality traits required for those behaviors. By this theory, applicants choose the most important traits according to on-the-job behaviors, and determine the correct (or most desirable) direction in which to manipulate those traits.

Implicit Job Theories were then expanded into Adopted Applicant Schemas posited by Vasilopoulos and his colleagues. The adopted applicant schema is compared to the trait measured by the item when deciding how to respond to the particular item. The schema contains an ideal profile that would be the optimal representation for the applicant to achieve. It should be noted that the adopted applicant schema is only activated as applicants engage in faking behavior, and is irrelevant of the honest trait level of the individual, or the beliefs about on-the-job behaviors, but rather, is based on the perception of the most successful applicant for the position.

Coaster and Christiansen (2009) proposed the concept of Ideal Applicant Schemas to account for specific instances of faking behavior that were not yet explained or investigated by other models of faking behavior. They conducted a within-subject faking study in which the simulated applicant condition was directed toward a description of an Assembler position. A separate sample was given a personality measure and asked to think of the ideal employee for the job and rate the level of each item required for job success. This served as the average Ideal Applicant Schema for the job.

In the honest condition, the average trait elevation on Agreeableness was above the average Ideal Applicant Schema for Agreeableness. In which case, scores on Agreeableness would be expected to decrease in the simulated applicant condition. This is exactly what happened; when applying for the Assembler position, individuals actually lowered their Agreeableness score to better emulate what they believed to be important for job success. Also,

applicants were able to raise their scores on Conscientiousness (for which the Ideal Applicant Schema was higher than the average honest elevation). This study did indeed provide evidence for the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas, but only analyzed their accuracy in predicting faking between-subjects (as a separate sample completed the Ideal Applicant measure) and only accounted for mean shifts in scale scores, not individual applicant scores or even item-level responding.

Recent research by Nathan Kuncel and his colleagues (Kuncel & Borneman, 2007; Kuncel & Tellegen, 2009) has hinted toward the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas. One study successfully detected faking behavior by examining the distribution of responses to an individual item. They found that bimodal and trimodal distributions of responses indicate faking behavior, as honest responding results in a normal distribution of scores on a particular item. This difference in response patterns shows that some individuals perceive the extreme negative response as most appropriate for the job, while others perceive the highest possible response option to be most effective on the same item. Interestingly, for trimodal distributions, some applicants actually believe the midpoint of the scale is the most desirable response when faking. The distinction of choosing high, medium, or low response options shows that individuals have an Ideal Applicant Schema in mind which they are attempting to emulate, but this schema may be fairly crude in nature.

Kuncel and Tellegen (2009) investigated the desirability of response options within individual items. If Implicit Job Theories explain faking behavior, one would expect a linear relationship between the trait elevation of the response option (e.g. 'disagree' to 'neutral' to 'agree' response options) and the desirability of the response. They examined the desirability of response options in a general context as well as in a work context. Overall, the relationship

between trait elevation of the response option and the desirability of the option was curvilinear, indicating that for most items, the extreme options are not the most desirable responses. Further, the desirability of the options changes when administered in a work context, suggesting the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas.

## The Current Study

The current study attempts to provide evidence for the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas by investigating this phenomenon at two distinct levels of analysis. As in Coaster and Christiansen (2009), overall scale scores (the individual as the unit of analysis) will be analyzed as the broadest level of analysis. Beyond this, Item Response Theory (IRT) models will be used to investigate Ideal Applicant Schemas at the individual item response level.

Before providing detailed information about each level of analysis employed in the current study, a brief overview of the design is required. In order to study faking behavior at the item level, a custom assessment of personality was developed. A sample of over 600 participants completed a standard measure of personality honestly in order to construct the custom measure. From these data, a within-trait forced-choice measure of personality was developed based on the IRT location parameter from the development sample for each item stem. Items that measure the same trait and differ in location parameters by varying amounts were matched as one item in which the respondent in the primary study had to choose which stem is most like them. The reason for the development of this measure is to isolate items at various levels of the latent trait (location parameters) in order to identify the exact theta level that is optimal for the job the applicant is applying for.

In the current study, participants completed measures at two time points. During the first session, participants completed the custom personality measure and a normative measure of personality honestly. They were then given a job description for a Parts Assembler position and asked to think of the ideal Parts Assembler, i.e. someone who performs this job very well. They were then asked to answer a number of items consisting of response options ranging from adjectives with low IRT location parameters to adjectives with high location parameters. They were instructed to indicate the adjective that best describes the ideal Parts Assembler. This will serve as the measure of Ideal Applicant Schema. At the second data collection session (two weeks after the first session), participants were asked to complete the personality measures as if applying for a job as a Parts Assembler. They were then given the same job description as in the first session and were asked to respond as if they were applying for the job in the description, and further, they really want the job.

# CHAPTER III

# HYPOTHESES

## Individual-Level Hypotheses

In an attempt to replicate the findings of Coaster and Christiansen (2009) and provide more evidence for the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas across participants, the following individual-level hypotheses have been formed:

> H1: Conscientiousness scores will be higher in the simulated applicant condition as compared to the honest condition.

> H2: Agreeableness scores will be lower in the simulated applicant condition compared to the honest condition.

Implicit Job Theories predict faking behavior based upon the importance of the trait for the job that an applicant is seeking, therefore:

> H3: Implicit Job Theories will predict faking behavior, such that greater trait importance will be associated with greater regression-adjusted difference scores between honest and simulated applicant conditions

The critical test for differentiating Ideal Applicant Schemas from Implicit Job Theories is the lowering of scores that are perceived to be negatively related to performance. Implicit Job Theories would suggest these traits to be unimportant for success, and therefore would not be faked by applicants. If this is the case, scores for Agreeableness in the simulated applicant condition should not be discernable from the honest scores. If Ideal Applicant Schemas are a viable model of faking behavior:

> H4: For individuals holding Ideal Applicant Schemas for Agreeableness that are lower than their honest score, simulated applicant condition scores will be lower than their honest score.
> H5: For individuals holding Ideal Applicant Schemas for Agreeableness that are higher than their honest trait elevation, simulated applicant condition scores will be higher than their honest scores.

Item-Level Hypothesis

Given an individual's Ideal Applicant Schema and honest trait elevation, the probability

of an individual choosing each response option can be calculated. If Ideal Applicant Schemas

are indeed guiding faking behavior, the accuracy of predicting item-level simulated applicant

condition responses should be better than chance.

> H6: Item-level responses in the simulated applicant condition will be predicted
> correctly at a probability greater than chance when using the individual's honest
> trait elevation and their Ideal Applicant Schema to calculate the most likely
> response.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

Participants

A total of 111 participants were recruited from Psychology courses at Central Michigan University. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (90%), Female (64%), Undergraduate Seniors (51%), and were employed part-time at the time of participation (64%). The average age of participants was 22 years and the average grade point average was 3.16 out of a possible 4.

Measures and Materials

*Single-Stimulus Personality*

Sixty-four behavioral statements measuring Conscientiousness and Agreeableness (32 items each) were chosen from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1992). The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale with one meaning "Strongly Disagree" and five meaning "Strongly Agree". An example behavioral statement for Agreeableness reads "I am the life of the party". An example item for Conscientiousness reads "I usually do things in a logical order".

*Forced-Choice Personality*

A pilot study of 600 participants completed the 64 items from the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1992) that were utilized in the Single-Stimulus Personality measure. The participants were solicited and completed the study online as part of a larger study. The mean age of the sample was 32, equally split between male and female, and was

employed at least 20 hours per week. Data were screened for outliers and non-purposeful responding prior to analyses.

These items were then used to develop the within-trait forced-choice measure for the main study. Items were chosen to create a test comprised of items that vary on IRT location parameters and points of maximum information. The final personality measure consisted of 32 items per trait, each with two stems. The test measured Conscientiousness and Agreeableness, for a total of 64 items. Scoring of this test was based on the IRT location parameter of the stems, with the stem that has a higher location parameter being scored as correct, and the lower location parameter stem as incorrect. Participants were instructed to choose the statement that is most true of them. An example item is shown below:

| I love to be the center of interest. | |
| I am humble about the good things that have happened to me. | |

Figure 2. *Example Forced-Choice Personality Item*

*Ideal Applicant Schema*

The measure of Ideal Applicant Schema was constructed using adjectives that were also given to the pilot sample of 600 participants. The scale was constructed using the IRT location parameters of the items. Three adjectives were placed along a continuous scale and participants were asked to choose which adjective is most descriptive of the ideal Assembler. The average location parameter of the selected adjectives for a given trait was used as the Ideal Applicant Schema. In order to make direct comparisons of the IAS measure with other measures used in this study, a linear transformation was performed to place the IAS measure on the same scale as the Honest condition personality measure (same mean and standard deviation). This linear

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transformation was completed a total of four times, once for each trait for SS and FC measures.

An example item from the IAS measure is provided below:

```
The ideal Assembler is…

 1      2      3      4      5

Shy          Direct       Assertive
```

Figure 3. *Example Item from Ideal Applicant Scheme Measure*


*Implicit Job Theory*

The measure from Christiansen, et al. (2005) was used to measure implicit job theory.  It consists of three parts.  The first is Forced-Choice format, asking the participant to choose between two adjectives regarding which one is more important for an individual in the position to possess.  There are 30 pairs of words in section one.  An example of this type of item is given below:

```
Please read each pair of adjectives and decide which trait you think is
most important for an Assembler to possess.

1.     STABLE                 or                 IMAGINATIVE
```

Figure 4. *Example Forced-Choice Item from the Implicit Job Theory Measure*


The second section contains statements that describe a work behavior.  The participants were then asked to rate how important each behavior is to target job on a five-point Likert-scale. Scores from each section were then summed by trait to form the overall IJT score.  An example of items in the third section is given below:

Please read each behavioral statement and indicate to what extent you feel that behavior is important for success as an Assembler. Please rate each statement using a five-point scale ranging from a 1 indicating that the behavior is not important to success for an Assembler to a 5, which indicates that the behavior is very important to success for an Assembler

Taking control in group situations in order to better achieve
work goals.                                                    1      2      3      4      5

Figure 5. *Example Work Behavior Item from the Implicit Job Theory Measure*

The third section contains a description of each of the big five personality traits. After

reading the description, participants were required to rate how important each trait is for

successful completion of the target job. An example item is provided below.

| Do you feel that the trait of extroversion is important for success as an assembler? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| No, extraversion is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of extraversion is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, extraversion is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

Figure 6. *Example Personality Trait Importance Item from the Implicit Job Theory Measure*

*Job Description*

The simulated applicant condition included a job description toward which participants

were to direct their faking behavior. This job description was adapted from an Assembler

position description at a local organization. This description listed the general duties of the job

and also the skills required for successful performance.

Procedure

Data collection occurred during two sessions, the first being two weeks prior to the second. During the first session, participants were greeted and asked to sign the consent form. Then they completed the personality measures honestly. Next, the job description for the Parts Assembler position was distributed. The experimenter then read through the job description aloud to the participants and instructed them to think of a successful Assembler, and complete the personality measure by selecting the behavioral statement from each pair that best describes the ideal Parts Assembler. After completing the Ideal Applicant Schema measure, participants were asked to look over the job description again and respond to the Implicit Job Theory measure. Participants were then thanked for their participation and reminded to appear for the second session two weeks later.

During the second session, participants were again greeted and asked to sign the consent form. The Parts Assembler job description was again distributed to all participants. The experimenter read the description aloud once again. This time, participants were instructed to imagine they are applying for the job in the description, and further, it is a job they really want. They were also instructed to complete the following assessments in a manner that is most likely to get them selected for the job as a Parts Assembler. This instruction set served as the simulated applicant condition. After completing the personality assessment, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

<div align="center">Analyses</div>

To test the first two hypotheses, scores from the normative personality measure were computed and analyzed. A repeated measures T-Test was used to test the difference between the honest and simulated applicant condition scores for Conscientiousness and Agreeableness

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separately.  Hypothesis three required the computation of regression-adjusted difference scores to control for the limitations of the scale.  For example, an individual with a very high honest trait elevation does not have the same opportunity to increase their score as someone with low honest trait elevation.  These regression-adjusted difference scores between the simulated applicant and honest condition scores were then correlated with the Implicit Job Theory importance rating for each trait.

For the fourth and fifth hypotheses, raw scores for Agreeableness were calculated for the Ideal Applicant Schema measure and the Honest condition normative measure.  Participants whom held a lower Ideal Applicant Schema for Agreeableness as compared to their honest score (operationalized as a quarter of a standard deviation below) were selected out of the data set to test hypothesis four, and those that held Ideal Applicant Schemas at least a quarter standard deviation higher than their honest trait elevation were selected to test hypothesis five.  The difference between their honest and simulated applicant condition scores for Agreeableness was then tested using a repeated measures (paired samples) T-test.  Figure 2 shows how these results would be depicted if the hypothesized relationships are found.
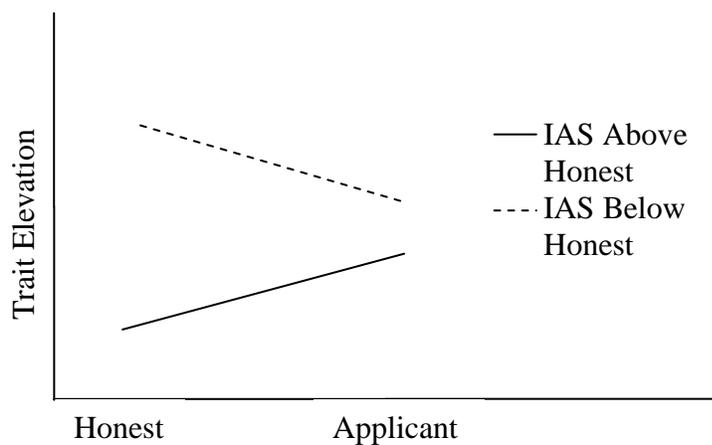


Figure 7. *Depiction of Ideal Applicant Schema and Honest Trait Elevation Differences*

Hypothesis six utilizes individual items as the unit of analysis. In order to accomplish this, the Honest, Applicant, and Ideal Applicant Schema scale scores were equated to reflect the same mean and standard deviation prior to analysis. If the average response for the Ideal Applicant Schema were above the average response of the honest condition, simulated applicants would be predicted to choose the stem with the higher average response to match the Ideal Applicant Schema. In contrast, if the average response of the Ideal Applicant Schema were below that of the same item in the honest condition, the simulated applicant condition response would be expected to be lower than the honest. The accuracy of these predictions was computed using a sign test chi-square. The number of items in which the average response in the simulated applicant condition was in the predicted direction (compared to the honest condition) was compared to the number of items in which the change in response was in the incorrect direction.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables utilized in this study were

computed and are depicted in Table 1.  The design of the present study resulted eight distinct

measures of each trait (for a total of 16).  Each trait was measured via Single Stimulus (SS) and

Forced Choice (FC).  Each of these was either completed Honestly (H), as an Applicant (A), or

the regression-adjusted difference score between conditions was computed to represent Faking

Behavior (F).  The final two measures of each trait stem from the Implicit Job Theory (IJT) or

Ideal Applicant Schema (IAS) measures.  Scale reliability estimates (Cronbach's Alpha) are

shown on the main diagonal of the correlation matrix.  In general, reliability estimates are

favorable, ranging from .85 to .92 for single-stimulus measures.  The reliability for the forced-

choice scales is somewhat lower, as can be expected when reducing the number of response

options to just two per item.  It should be noted that reliability estimates cannot be computed for

the regression-adjusted difference scores (which indicate faking behavior) because these are not

summated rating scales.  The correlations between Implicit Job Theories and Ideal Applicant

Schemas were quite modest, at just .19 for Agreeableness and .16 for Conscientiousness.  This

provides preliminary evidence that Ideal Applicant Schemas are related to, yet distinct from

Implicit Job Theories; sharing only 3-4% of the variance in one another.

Table 1. *Correlations among Variables*

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 SS Agreeableness (H) | 122.58 | 12.61 | .85 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 SS Agreeableness (A) | 122.70 | 13.11 | .53 | .89 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 FC Agreeableness (H) | 25.23 | 3.80 | .66 | .44 | .69 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 FC Agreeableness (A) | 24.56 | 3.42 | .29 | .57 | .40 | .62 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 SS Agreeableness (F) | .00 | 11.26 | .00 | .85 | .10 | .49 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 FC Agreeableness (F) | .00 | 3.16 | .02 | .43 | .00 | .92 | .50 | -- | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 IJT Agreeableness | 23.19 | 3.49 | .15 | .10 | .12 | .05 | .02 | .01 | .56 | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 IAS Agreeableness | 85.18 | 12.53 | .13 | .10 | .13 | .27 | .04 | .24 | .19 | .86 | | | | | | | | |
| 9 SS Conscientiousness (H) | 122.64 | 14.05 | .24 | .14 | .24 | .18 | .01 | .10 | .21 | .06 | .87 | | | | | | | |
| 10 SS Conscientiousness (A) | 143.75 | 13.62 | .09 | .40 | .16 | .28 | .42 | .21 | .06 | -.03 | .26 | .92 | | | | | | |
| 11 FC Conscientiousness (H) | 24.85 | 3.51 | .22 | .15 | .24 | .20 | .03 | .11 | .19 | .10 | .54 | .14 | .62 | | | | | |
| 12 FC Conscientiousness (A) | 25.70 | 2.58 | .13 | .37 | .27 | .55 | .36 | .49 | .01 | .12 | .13 | .40 | .28 | .46 | | | | |
| 13 SS Conscientiousness (F) | .00 | 13.30 | .02 | .39 | .10 | .24 | .44 | .19 | -.01 | -.05 | .00 | .96 | .00 | .37 | -- | | | |
| 14 FC Conscientiousness (F) | .00 | 2.49 | .09 | .35 | .21 | .52 | .36 | .48 | -.04 | .13 | -.04 | .36 | .00 | .96 | .39 | -- | | |
| 15 IJT Conscientiousness | 33.50 | 3.34 | .10 | .17 | .04 | .13 | .14 | .13 | .19 | .28 | .14 | .36 | .02 | .23 | .32 | .29 | .59 | |
| 16 IAS Conscientiousness | 90.93 | 7.10 | .02 | -.17 | -.09 | -.01 | -.19 | .04 | -.04 | .61 | -.02 | -.07 | -.04 | -.07 | -.08 | -.06 | .16 | .73 |

*Note*: $N$= 111, scale reliability is depicted on the main diagonal, H= Honest Condition, A= Applicant Condition, F= Faking behavior, SS= Single Stimulus, FC= Forced-Choice, IJT= Implicit Job Theory, IAS= Ideal Applicant Schema. Correlations > .24 are significant at $p \leq .01$ (two-tailed), Correlations > .18 are significant at $p \leq .05$ (two-tailed).

Hypotheses 1 and 2 seek to provide evidence that participants in a simulated applicant condition can manipulate their scores on personality tests. For Conscientiousness, participants did indeed increase their scores beyond what would be expected due to sampling error ($t(110) = 12.27$, $p < .01$ for Single Stimulus, $t(110) = 2.37$, $p = .02$ for Forced-Choice). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. For Hypothesis 2, it was assumed that participants would have higher honest trait elevation in agreeableness as compared to their Ideal Applicant Schema, and should therefore lower their scores in the simulated applicant condition. When given the single-stimulus measure, scores were nearly identical in the honest and simulated applicant conditions; and although participants did lower their scores on the forced-choice measure, this difference was not great enough to rule out sampling error as an explanation ($t(110) = .04$, *n.s.* for Single Stimulus, $t(110) = -1.6$, *n.s.* for Forced-Choice). These results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Comparison of Honest Applicant Conditions*

| | Condition | | | | | | |
| | Honest | | Applicant | | | | |
| Variable | M | SD | M | SD | d | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SS Agreeableness | 122.68 | 12.89 | 122.73 | 13.30 | .00 | .04 | .97 |
| FC Agreeableness | 25.23 | 3.80 | 24.62 | 3.44 | -.17 | -1.60 | .11 |
| SS Conscientiousness | 122.94 | 14.10 | 143.61 | 13.78 | 1.48 | 12.27 | .00 |
| FC Conscientiousness | 24.85 | 3.51 | 25.71 | 2.59 | .28 | 2.37 | .02 |

*Note*: *N*= 111, SS= Single Stimulus, FC= Forced-Choice.

Hypothesis 3 posits that Implicit Job Theories will predict faking behavior. Faking behavior was operationalized as the regression-adjusted difference between Honest and Applicant conditions. As shown in Table 3, IJTs were significantly correlated with faking behavior for Conscientiousness, but were not for Agreeableness. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is partially supported.

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Table 3. *Correlations between Implicit Job Theories and Faking Behavior*

| Variable | $r$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|
| SS Agreeableness | .02 | .85 |
| FC Agreeableness | .01 | .93 |
| SS Conscientiousness | .32 | .00 |
| FC Conscientiousness | .29 | .00 |

*Note*: $N=$ 111, SS= Single Stimulus, FC= Forced-Choice. Faking Behavior is operationalized as the regression-adjusted difference between Honest and Applicant conditions.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 were proposed to add evidence of Ideal Applicant schemas. It was proposed that participants holding an Ideal Applicant Schema that is higher in trait elevation than their honest level of that trait would be likely to increase their score in the simulated applicant condition to match their Ideal Applicant Schema. Conversely, participants holding an Ideal Applicant Schema that is lower than their honest trait elevation should lower their scores in the simulated applicant condition. Since Conscientiousness is positively related to job performance across occupations, Agreeableness was the focal trait for these hypotheses.

To investigate the nature of these differences, a polynomial regression was conducted following the methods outlined by Edwards (2007). To explore the effects of Ideal Applicant Schemas and faking behavior, the Simulated Applicant scores were regressed on the IAS and Honest condition scores in step one of the regression, with the squared values and the cross-product entered in step two. The squaring of the values in step two of the moderated regression analysis allows the calculation of response surfaces that compare values along all three axes. The results of the moderated regression are shown in Table 4. The only case in which the interaction term failed to add incremental explained variance occurred for the Single-Stimulus Conscientiousness measure.

Table 4. *Moderating Effects of Ideal Applicant Schemas on the Relationship between Honest and Simulated Applicant Personality Scores*

| | $b$ | SE | β | $p$ | $R$ | $R^2$ | $\Delta R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Agreeableness SS** | | | | | | | |
| **Step   Variable** | | | | | | | |
| 1    Honest Agreeableness(SS) | .60 | .09 | .58 | .00 | | | |
|        IAS | -.05 | .10 | -.05 | .61 | .51 | .261 | .261** |
| 2    Honest Agreeableness(SS)$^2$ | .01 | .00 | .15 | .11 | | | |
|        IAS$^2$ | -.01 | .00 | -.30 | .00 | | | |
|        Honest Agreeableness(SS)$^2$ X IAS$^2$ | .00 | .01 | .04 | .71 | .61 | .374 | .113** |
| **Agreeableness FC** | | | | | | | |
| **Step   Variable** | | | | | | | |
| 1    Honest Agreeableness(FC) | .35 | .08 | .39 | .00 | | | |
|        IAS | .03 | .03 | .11 | .23 | .46 | .208 | .208** |
| 2    Honest Agreeableness(FC)$^2$ | .02 | .01 | .14 | .13 | | | |
|        IAS$^2$ | .00 | .00 | -.34 | .00 | | | |
|        Honest Agreeableness(FC)$^2$ X IAS$^2$ | .00 | .01 | -.01 | .94 | .56 | .317 | .109** |
| **Conscientiousness SS** | | | | | | | |
| **Step   Variable** | | | | | | | |
| 1    Honest Conscientiousness(SS) | .28 | .10 | .29 | .01 | | | |
|        IAS | .00 | .23 | .00 | 1.00 | .28 | .078 | .078* |
| 2    Honest Conscientiousness(SS)$^2$ | .00 | .01 | .03 | .81 | | | |
|        IAS$^2$ | .00 | .01 | -.03 | .86 | | | |
|        Honest Conscientiousness(SS)$^2$ X IAS$^2$ | .01 | .02 | .12 | .41 | .31 | .094 | .016 |
| **Conscientiousness FC** | | | | | | | |
| **Step   Variable** | | | | | | | |
| 1    Honest Conscientiousness(FC) | .27 | .08 | .33 | .00 | | | |
|        IAS | .08 | .04 | .21 | .05 | .29 | .084 | .084* |
| 2    Honest Conscientiousness(FC)$^2$ | .02 | .01 | .16 | .15 | | | |
|        IAS$^2$ | .00 | .00 | -.35 | .04 | | | |
|        Honest Conscientiousness(FC)$^2$ X IAS$^2$ | .01 | .01 | .01 | .44 | .48 | .234 | .150** |

*Note*. N =111. The regression coefficients of the final step are reported.  β = the standardized regression coefficient. $R^2$= the proportion of variance in the dependent variable accounted for by all predictors.  $\Delta R^2$= change in the proportion of variance due to added predictor variables.  *$p$ < .05, **$p$ < .01

A mixed-model analysis of variance was conducted to test the difference in means

between Honest and Simulated Applicant conditions (within-subject) by IAS and Honest trait

elevation (two groups were defined as in the above analysis for each trait and item format, with

one group with IAS > Honest and one group with IAS < Honest as determined by .25 SD above

and below the mean of the equated variables for each). The results of this analysis are shown in

Table 5. Although the within-subject means between Honest and Simulated Applicant

Agreeableness scores were not significantly different from one another across all levels of IAS,

all other comparisons yield substantial differences. Most notably, all between-subject

comparisons were significant, demonstrating differential faking behavior depending on whether

the IAS is above or below the participants' honest trait elevation.

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Table 5. *Analysis of Variance for Faking Behavior and Ideal Applicant Schema*

| Source | $F$ | $\eta_p^2$ | $p$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Between-Subjects | | |
| SS Agreeableness | | | |
| IAS > or < Honest | 26.28 | .22 | .00 |
| FC Agreeableness | | | |
| IAS > or < Honest | 17.10 | .17 | .00 |
| SS Conscientiousness | | | |
| IAS > or < Honest | 36.71 | .32 | .00 |
| FC Conscientiousness | | | |
| IAS > or < Honest | 35.30 | .31 | .00 |
| | Within-Subjects | | |
| SS Agreeableness | .01 | .00 | .95 |
| SS Agreeableness X IAS | 8.28 | .08 | .01 |
| FC Agreeableness | .13 | .00 | .71 |
| FC Agreeableness X IAS | 42.87 | .34 | .00 |
| SS Conscientiousness | 162.03 | .68 | .00 |
| SS Conscientiousness X IAS | 36.09 | .32 | .00 |
| FC Conscientiousness | 7.31 | .09 | .01 |
| FC Conscientiousness X IAS | 35.83 | .32 | .00 |

*Note:* Values encased in parentheses represent mean square error. Condition refers to Honest vs. Simulated Applicant. IAS group defined as .25 SD above and below the Honest condition mean for the target trait.

In addition to the analysis above, further evidence of the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas was explored through additional analyses. In order to compare the relationships among measures and their impact on faking behavior, the Ideal Applicant Schema had to be transformed to the same metric as the Honest condition score for Agreeableness. A linear transformation of the Ideal Applicant Schema set the mean and standard deviation to that of the Honest condition. In order to test Hypothesis 4, differences between honest and simulated applicant conditions

were examined for individuals whose Ideal Applicant Schemas were at least one quarter of a

standard deviation below their honest score.  The same method was used to test Hypothesis 5,

except participants with Ideal Applicant Schemas at least one quarter of a standard deviation

above their Honest condition scores were targeted.  As shown in Table 6, participants in the

simulated applicant condition did tend to manipulate their scores in the direction of their Ideal

Applicant Schema.

Table 6. *Comparison of Honest and Applicant Conditions by Ideal Applicant*
*Schema in Relation to Honest Trait Evaluation*

| | Condition | | | | | |
| | Honest | | Applicant | | | |
| Variable | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *p* |
| Agreeableness | | | | | | |
| IAS < SS Honest | 129.77 | 10.11 | 126.09 | 13.89 | -1.94 | .03 |
| IAS < FC Honest | 27.37 | 2.83 | 24.85 | 4.01 | -5.55 | .00 |
| IAS > SS Honest | 115.61 | 11.23 | 119.12 | 11.43 | 2.13 | .02 |
| IAS > FC Honest | 22.36 | 3.44 | 24.62 | 2.97 | 2.97 | .00 |
| Conscientiousness | | | | | | |
| IAS < SS Honest | 134.92 | 9.23 | 145.21 | 12.56 | 5.80 | .00 |
| IAS < FC Honest | 27.26 | 2.02 | 26.00 | 3.04 | -2.04 | .01 |
| IAS > SS Honest | 112.12 | 10.52 | 141.17 | 15.06 | 11.63 | .00 |
| IAS > FC Honest | 21.89 | 3.61 | 25.24 | 2.64 | 5.46 | .00 |

*Note*: N= 43 for each comparison.  *t* and *p* values based on paired samples analysis (one-tailed).

In order to elucidate the results of the prediction depicted in Figure 1, the means from

Table 6 are plotted below for agreeableness.  By examining these simple mean plots, it can be

inferred that simulated applicants attempted to manipulate their scores toward an ideal point, and

did not uniformly manipulate scores in only one direction.  This finding calls into question much

of the faking research to this point, as only looking at the mean honest elevation and the mean

applicant elevation would lead one to conclude that faking did not occur, when in fact applicants

did manipulate responses. When some applicants lower their scores and some raise scores to match their Ideal Applicant Schema, the net effect is a minimal shift in the population mean. Large shifts in population means occur only when the Ideal Applicant Schemas are uniformly higher or lower than the honest trait elevation of the applicants.



**FC Agreeableness**

**SS Agreeableness**

**FC Conscientiousness**

**SS Conscientiousness**
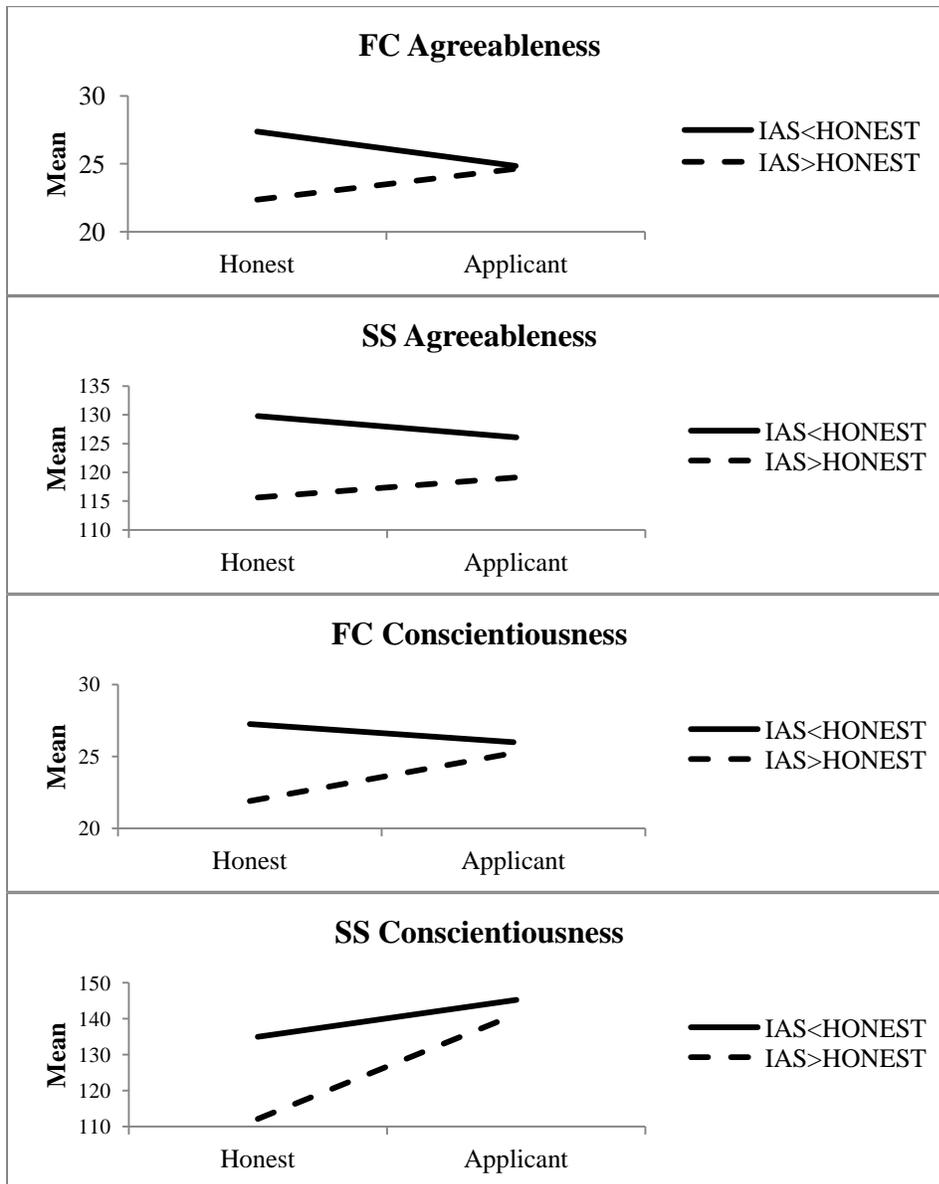
Figure 8. *Mean Plots of Hypotheses 4 and 5*

In order to test Hypothesis 6, data were transposed to reflect the items as the units of

analysis. Recall that item stems from the single-stimulus measures were used to construct the

forced-choice measures. Therefore, the ratings of these item stems in the Honest condition can

be compared to the corresponding Ideal Applicant Schema to predict which stem will be selected

most often in the Applicant condition forced-choice measures. Simulated applicants should

theoretically choose the item stem (on the FC measure) that best represents their Ideal Applicant

Schema. In other words, the item stem that most closely matches the average Ideal Applicant

Schema for that trait should be stem that is selected in the FC Simulated Applicant Condition.

For example:

| Item Stem | Honest | IAS | Difference | Prediction |
|-----------|--------|-----|------------|------------|
| I am always on time for appointments. | 2.54 | 2.34 | .20 | Not Selected |
| I often keep things tidy. | 2.30 | 2.34 | .04 | Selected |

Figure 9. *Examples of Predictions Made Using Honest Versus IAS Ratings*

Using this logic, a prediction was made for each of the 32 forced-choice items for each

trait. The results of these predictions are shown in Table 5. Generally, these predictions were

accurate at a rate greater than would be expected by chance, and thus Hypothesis 6 is supported,

$\chi^2(1, 111)= 1.56$, $p = .055$ for Agreeableness, $\chi^2(1, 111)= 6.25$, $p < .001$ for Conscientiousness.

Table 7. *Comparison of Item-Level Predictions*

| Trait | Correct | Incorrect | $\chi^2$ | $p$ |
|-------|---------|-----------|----------|-----|
| Agreeableness | 21 | 11 | 1.56 | .06 |
| Conscientiousness | 26 | 6 | 6.25 | .00 |

*Note*: N= 32.  *p* is one-tailed.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Although many studies have indicated that job applicants manipulate their scores on personality assessments, relatively little is known about the cognitive mechanisms underlying this behavior. Previous research has shown that the importance of traits relative to the demands of the job has a large impact on the amount that applicants will distort their responses; with more important traits being manipulated more than less important traits. The current study sought to expand and modify this hypothesis by adding the concept of Ideal Applicant Schemas which act as an ideal point of trait elevation that the applicant believes is optimal for the position to which the applicant is applying.

Results indicate the existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas as a cognitive mechanism underlying faking behavior in job applicants. This is evidenced by a number of key findings. Implicit Job Theories were significantly correlated with faking behavior for the trait of Conscientiousness, but were only minimally related to faking on Agreeableness. The significant findings for Conscientiousness are indicative of the importance of this trait for the Assembler job in the Simulated Applicant sample. Since it was perceived to be very important, and was manipulated to a great extent, the faking behavior is correlated with trait importance and thus with the Implicit Job Theory. Agreeableness, on the other hand, was perceived to be less important (via Implicit Job Theory) but simulated applicants still manipulated their scores; attenuating the relationship between Implicit Job Theories and faking. From these results, it can be assumed that applicants will distort their scores regardless of trait importance.

The existence of Ideal Applicant Schemas is further highlighted by the analyses conducted for Hypotheses 4 and 5. Implicit Job Theories would posit faking behavior to be

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minimal for Agreeableness, since it was perceived to be of little importance, yet when examining groups of simulated applicants who's Ideal Applicant Schemas differed from their Honest condition trait elevation, it becomes clear that trait importance is not the only driver of faking behavior.

Do applicants know something that we do not? One might ask why applicants would intentionally want to lower their scores on any assessment. The answer to this may lie in possible curvilinear relationships between personality and job performance. Recent research has shown that although personality is highly correlated with job performance, higher trait elevation does not always lead to better performance on the job. Le, et al. (2010) investigated Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability in the prediction of a variety of work outcomes (including task performance) and found that there is a point at which higher trait elevation no longer results in improved work outcomes, and may even result in decreased performance as trait elevation increases. Further, job complexity moderated this effect, such that less complex jobs have a steeper decline in performance beyond the point of inflection. It can be assumed that the Assembler position in the current study is likely a job of low complexity, and thus performance is assumed to decrease with trait elevation of Agreeableness beyond the ideal point. Perhaps applicants implicitly assume the relationship between the trait measured and performances on the job is curvilinear, and thus attempt to identify the ideal trait elevation via their Ideal Applicant Schema. Although this cognitive process of faking may seem too complex for an applicant to consider during the assessment, the applicant would simply need to ponder the question "How should I respond in order to make myself appear to be a better candidate?" It can be simplified to just this one question because the importance of the trait is irrelevant and the honest trait elevation acts as the anchor point from which the score manipulation originates. This is in

contrast to the six-question decision tree proposed by Goffin and Boyd (2009), which proposes a rational decision-making process for each item.

One alternative explanation for this finding could be that since the simulated applicants with honest trait elevation that is higher than their Ideal Applicant Schema tended to score highly in the Honest condition, their scores would likely decrease during another administration of the scale by chance alone. Inversely, those with low honest trait elevation would be expected to regress toward the mean, regardless of the simulated applicant instructions. Although these ceiling and floor effects were mitigated in the Faking score (via the use of regression-adjusted differences), they cannot be ruled out when comparing the means within each condition. Therefore, it is unrealistic to believe that the entire shift in means is due to the Ideal Applicant Schema when in fact a portion of this change would occur due to chance alone.

We need to be cautious when addressing faking behavior at various levels of analysis when it is likely an item-level phenomenon. The majority of faking research only addresses faking at the scale- or construct-level, rarely do researchers dissect responding at the item-level. Some research has been conducted using personality items as the unit of analysis (e.g. Zickar & Robie, 1999, Kuncel & Telegen, 2009, etc.), but even this research is more concerned with the measurement properties of faked items or the identification of faking through item responses, and not the cognitive processing of the applicant while responding to such items. The confirmation of Hypothesis 6 shows that faking does indeed occur at the item level, and further, item level responding can be predicted by other information like the honest trait elevation and Ideal Applicant Schema. This finding is important because it exemplifies the importance of Ideal Applicant Schemas in relation to the honest trait elevation of the applicant.

Limitations of the Current Study

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Although the current study elucidates many of the cognitive processes underlying applicant faking on personality assessments, the results should also be taken with caution due to various limitations. Perhaps the largest of these limitations is the use of a student sample. This not only lessens the ecological validity, but also changes the motivation of the participants to something different from what would be expected in actual job applicants. This difference was partially mitigated by the use of a job description to which the simulated applicants were applying. Other studies of faking behavior sometimes instruct participants to 'fake good', or to improve their scores as much as they can. This instruction set negates the effect of Ideal Applicant Schemas completely, as there is no ideal profile when attempting to inflate all scores uniformly. Although we tried to simulate the applicant experience by providing a job description and stressing that the participants really want the job in the description, a student in a laboratory would not be expected to have the same motivation to fake as a real job applicant because there are no real-world consequences dependent on the outcome of the assessment. Because of this, the results of the currently study cannot be generalized to populations of job applicants.

A second limitation of the current study is the use of custom measures that are not widely scrutinized like other, commercially available assessments. The construction of custom assessments was necessary in this study because the forced-choice measure required item stems measuring the same trait within each item. Typically, response options will include stems measuring different traits. One mitigating factor for this limitation is that the items used to construct the measures have been widely used in previous research. Since the entire scales had been formulated for this study, there are no norms for these measures and therefore we have no way to tell if the sample used in this study differs significantly from a normative sample. A third limitation of the current study is the reliance on one source of data. Although self-report is a

generally accepted method of measuring personality traits, it would have been useful to use another source for this information in the current study. Also, although a full two weeks had elapsed between administrations of the measures, biases due to repeated administrations of the same assessment could have influenced the data.

Future Research

There are a number of questions raised by the current study that should be addressed in future research. First, future research should attempt to replicate these findings utilizing samples of actual applicants. Although such a study would be difficult to implement in practice, perhaps the honest and Ideal Applicant Schema measurements could be gathered from applicants who were not selected for the job, or those whom were hired. This would mean that the applicant condition would be administered before the honest and Ideal Applicant measures, but this may be the only way to conduct such a study in applied settings.

Second, an assessment of Ideal Applicant Schemas should be developed to ensure proper psychometric properties and construct validity. Personality-oriented job analysis techniques can tell us a lot about what traits and behaviors are actually required to perform the tasks of the job, but they tell us very little about what applicants perceive as the trait profile of the ideal applicant. This information would lead to a better understanding of faking behavior and inform researchers and practitioners about possible ways to mitigate this behavior through more advanced assessments.

Future research should also investigate external correlates of the accuracy of Ideal Applicant Schemas. Ideal Applicant Schemas may be universal conceptions learned from a variety of sources, or they could be very precise judgments formed by years of experience

observing and performing the job.  The current study does not provide any insights concerning the source of this information, but rather that these schemas do exist and affect behavior. Individual differences in cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, and even job knowledge could also account for significant proportions of variance in the accuracy of Ideal Applicant Schemas.

## Conclusion

Ideal Applicant Schemas are a very simple explanation of applicant faking behavior, yet are extremely difficult to conceptualize and measure.  The current study provides evidence of the existence of trait profiles that guide faking behavior, regardless of the perceived importance of the trait for the job being sought.  Ideal Applicant Schemas do not provide information concerning who will fake, or in what circumstances, but they do provide insights into the cognitive process of faking when it does occur.

APPENDICES

## PERSONALITY MEASURE – SINGLE STIMULUS

Below you will find a number of statements.  Please indicate the extent to which you agree to each statement by circling the corresponding number on the scale to the right.  Please circle only one response for each item.

| | Strongly Disagree | | Neither | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I have a conscience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I have no need for close friendships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I love order and regularity in my everyday life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I am nice to people I should be angry at. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I often arrive late. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am sensitive to the needs of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I usually do things in a logical order. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I have difficulty showing affection to people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I neglect my duties often. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I make my own rules. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I always know why I do things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I know modesty doesn't become me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I can clearly picture in my mind what I want to happen in my future | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I love children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I am generally always on time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I try not to do favors for others for various reasons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I am often late to work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I have difficulty accepting love from anyone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I sometimes cannot make up my mind for the life of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I love to be the center of interest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I often forget to put things back in their proper place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I am willing to make personal sacrifices in order to help people I care about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. I always respect others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I am humble about the good things that have happened to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I accomplish my work on time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. I can get along with most people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. I often take care of my responsibilities as soon as possible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. I tend to deny others their turn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. I am not bothered by disorder. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. I believe that most people dislike helping other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. I really can't stand being late. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. I am unwilling to accept apologies from people who have crossed me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Most of the time I need things to be arranged in a particular order. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. I love helping others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. I know how to apply my knowledge. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. I keep my feelings to myself, regardless of how unhappy I am. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. I rarely clean the house. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. I am generally easy to satisfy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. I will succeed with the goals I set for myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. I give compliments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. I typically accomplish a lot of work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. I am never too busy to help a friend. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. I can stay focused on tasks, even when I'm happy and excited about an upcoming event. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. I tend to dislike soft-hearted people for various reasons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. I hardly ever finish things on time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. I get suspicious when someone treats me nicely for no apparent reason. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. I often keep things tidy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. I get along with others usually. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. I am not highly motivated to succeed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. I believe that others are drawn to me because I am humble. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. I usually leave a mess in my room. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. I seldom help out when people feel overwhelmed be things that need to be done. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. I usually respect the opinions of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. I don't care about rules. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. I know that my life has no strong purpose. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 56. I see to my own needs first. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. I usually push myself very hard to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| succeed. | | | | | |
| 58. I find it hard to forgive others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. I am always on time to appointments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. I feel that too much modesty gets a person in trouble. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. I do things at the last minute. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. I always hug my close friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63. I like to tidy up afterwards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64. I offer to help with others' problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX B

## PERSONALITY MEASURE – FORCED-CHOICE

Below you will find pairs of statements. Please indicate which of the two statements is MOST like you by placing an X in the box to the right. Please select ONLY ONE statement per pair.

EXAMPLE:

| I am the life of the party. | |
| --- | --- |
| I enjoy going to museums. | **X** |

1.

| I am often late for work. | |
| --- | --- |
| I really can't stand being late. | |

2.

| I have difficulty showing affection to people. | |
| --- | --- |
| I feel that too much modesty gets a person in trouble. | |

3.

| I love order and regularity in my everyday life. | |
| --- | --- |
| I usually leave a mess in my room. | |

4.

| I am never too busy to help a friend. | |
| --- | --- |
| I have no need for close relationships. | |

5.

| I hardly ever finish things on time. | |
| --- | --- |
| I am not bothered by disorder. | |

6.

| I tend to deny others their turn. | |
| --- | --- |
| I offer help with others' problems. | |

7.

| I am always on time for appointments. | |
|---|---|
| I often take care of my responsibilities as soon as possible. | |

8.

| I make my own rules. | |
|---|---|
| I find it hard to forgive others. | |

9.

| I like to tidy up afterwards. | |
|---|---|
| I know that my life has no strong purpose. | |

10.

| I believe that most people dislike helping other people. | |
|---|---|
| I tend to dislike soft-hearted people for various reasons. | |

11.

| I always know why I do things. | |
|---|---|
| I am generally always on time. | |

12.

| I give compliments. | |
|---|---|
| I believe that others are drawn to me because I am humble. | |

13.

| I can clearly picture in my mind what I want to happen in my future. | |
|---|---|
| I do things at the last minute. | |

14.

| I love to be the center of interest. | |
|---|---|
| I can get along with most people. | |

15.

| | |
|---|---|
| I neglect my duties often. | |
| I usually respect the opinions of others. | |

16.

| | |
|---|---|
| I try not to do favors for others for various reasons. | |
| I am nice to people I should be angry at. | |

17.

| | |
|---|---|
| I will succeed with the goals I set for myself. | |
| I usually push myself very hard to succeed. | |

18.

| | |
|---|---|
| I get suspicious when someone treats me nicely for no apparent reason. | |
| I seldom help out when people feel overwhelmed by things that need to get done. | |

19.

| | |
|---|---|
| I often arrive late. | |
| Most of the time I need things to be arranged in a particular order. | |

20.

| | |
|---|---|
| I am sensitive to the needs of others. | |
| I always hug my close friends. | |

21.

| | |
|---|---|
| I sometimes can't make up my mind for the life of me. | |
| I am not highly motivated to succeed. | |

22.

| | |
|---|---|
| I am generally easy to satisfy. | |
| I get along well with others usually. | |

23.

| I typically accomplish a lot of work. | |
|---|---|
| I always respect others. | |

24.

| I know modesty doesn't become me. | |
|---|---|
| I have difficulty accepting love from anyone. | |

25.

| I can stay focused on tasks, even when I'm happy and excited about an upcoming event. | |
|---|---|
| I accomplish my work on time. | |

26.

| I am humble about the good things that have happened to me. | |
|---|---|
| I don't care about rules. | |

27.

| I rarely clean my house. | |
|---|---|
| I usually do things in a logical order. | |

28.

| I see to my own needs first. | |
|---|---|
| I love to help others. | |

29.

| I have a conscience. | |
|---|---|
| I often forget to put things back in their proper place. | |

30.

| I am unwilling to accept apologies from people who have crossed me. | |
|---|---|
| I am willing to make personal sacrifices in order to help people I care about. | |

31.

| I know how to apply my knowledge. | |
|---|---|
| I often keep things tidy. | |

32.

| I keep my feelings to myself, regardless of how unhappy I am. | |
|---|---|
| I love children. | |

33.

| I am often late to work. | |
|---|---|
| I usually leave a mess in my room. | |

34.

| I have no need for close friendships. | |
|---|---|
| I have difficulty showing affection to people. | |

35.

| Most of the time I need things to be arranged in a particular order. | |
|---|---|
| I usually push myself very hard to succeed. | |

36.

| I get suspicious when someone treats me nicely for no apparent reason. | |
|---|---|
| I always hug my close friends. | |

37.

| I really can't stand being late. | |
|---|---|
| I love order and regularity in my everyday life. | |

38.

| I am never too busy to help a friend. | |
|---|---|
| I feel that too much modesty gets a person in trouble. | |

39.

| I often arrive late. | |
| --- | --- |
| I will succeed with the goals I set for myself. | |

40.

| I seldom help out when people feel overwhelmed by things that need to be done. | |
| --- | --- |
| I am sensitive to the needs of others. | |

41.

| I often take care of my responsibilities as soon as possible. | |
| --- | --- |
| I hardly ever finish things on time. | |

42.

| I tend to deny others their turn. | |
| --- | --- |
| I find it hard to forgive others. | |

43.

| I typically accomplish a lot of work. | |
| --- | --- |
| I am not bothered by disorder. | |

44.

| I have difficulty accepting love from anyone. | |
| --- | --- |
| I make my own rules. | |

45.

| I am not highly motivated to succeed. | |
| --- | --- |
| I usually do things in a logical order. | |

46.

| I know modesty doesn't become me. | |
| --- | --- |
| I offer to help with others' problems. | |

47.

| I am always on time for appointments. | |
|---|---|
| I sometimes can't make up my mind for the life of me. | |

48.

| I am generally easy to satisfy. | |
|---|---|
| I get along well with others usually. | |

49.

| I always respect others. | |
|---|---|
| I always know why I do things. | |

50.

| I tend to dislike soft-hearted people for various reasons. | |
|---|---|
| I see to my own needs first. | |

51.

| I know that my life has no strong purpose. | |
|---|---|
| I can stay focused on tasks, even when I'm happy and excited about an upcoming event. | |

52.

| I believe that others are drawn to me because I am humble. | |
|---|---|
| I believe that most people dislike helping other people. | |

53.

| I like to tidy up afterwards. | |
|---|---|
| I accomplish my work on time. | |

54.

| I don't care about rules. | |
|---|---|
| I give compliments. | |

55.

| I can clearly picture in my mind what I want to happen in my future. | |
| I am generally always on time. | |

56.

| I keep my feelings to myself, regardless of how unhappy I am. | |
| I try not to do favors for others for various reasons. | |

57.

| I rarely clean my house. | |
| I usually respect the opinions of others. | |

58.

| I am unwilling to accept apologies from people who have crossed me. | |
| I am nice to people I should be angry at. | |

59.

| I know how to apply my knowledge. | |
| I do things at the last minute. | |

60.

| I love to be the center of interest. | |
| I am humble about the good things that have happened to me. | |

61.

| I can get along with most people. | |
| I am willing to make personal sacrifices in order to help people I care about. | |

62.

| I neglect my duties often. | |
| I often keep things tidy. | |

63.

| I love children. | |
|---|---|
| I love to help others. | |

64.

| I often forget to put things back in their proper place. | |
|---|---|
| I have a conscience. | |

APPENDIX C

IMPLICIT JOB THEORY MEASURE – JOB RELEVENT TRAITS

Directions:
In this section, you will be given sets of paired adjectives. Adjectives are words used to describe things or people. Please read each pair of adjectives and decide which trait you think is most important for an Assembler to possess. Sometimes the choice may seem hard, particularly if neither of the adjectives seems related to the job or if both of them do. Still, try to answer each item by choosing one of the two as being more important than the other. You might think to yourself, "which of the two is more characteristic of the ideal assembler." Or if hiring a new assembler, which of the two would be better for him or her to possess.

Example: Suppose we asked whether it is more important for an Assembler to be assertive or reliable. The question would appear like this:

ASSERTIVE   or       RELIABLE

You would then choose ONE (and only one) that you think is more crucial for an Assembler to possess.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | STABLE | or | IMAGINATIVE |
| 2. | COOPERATIVE | or | EFFICIENT |
| 3. | STEADY | or | TRUSTFUL |
| 4. | IMAGINATIVE | or | CAREFUL |
| 5. | PLEASANT | or | ASSERTIVE |
| 6. | VERBAL | or | CONSISTENT |
| 7. | CALM | or | GENEROUS |
| 8. | SYMPATHETIC | or | STABLE |
| 9. | HELPFUL | or | INTELLIGENT |
| 10. | INVENTIVE | or | CONSIDERATE |
| 11. | ARTISTIC | or | OUTGOING |
| 12. | STEADY | or | DARING |
| 13. | KIND | or | CREATIVE |
| 14. | STABLE | or | BOLD |
| 15. | CONSIDERATE | or | TALKATIVE |
| 16. | WELL-ORGANIZED | or | RELAXED |
| 17. | NEAT | or | CREATIVE |
| 18. | RELAXED | or | INVENTIVE |
| 19. | KIND | or | ORGANIZED |
| 20. | PUNCTUAL | or | INTELLIGENT |
| 21. | CONSIDERATE | or | THOROUGH |
| 22. | UNEMOTIONAL | or | SERIOUS |
| 23. | PRACTICAL | or | STABLE |
| 24. | TALKATIVE | or | RELAXED |
| 25. | ACTIVE | or | CREATIVE |

| 26. | OUTGOING | or | GENEROUS |
|-----|----------|-----|----------|
| 27. | ENERGETIC | or | EFFICIENT |
| 28. | ASSERTIVE | or | ORGANIZED |
| 29. | NEAT | or | CALM |
| 30. | ENERGETIC | or | IMAGINATIVE |

APPENDIX D

IMPLICIT JOB THEORY MEASURE – JOB RELEVENT BEHAVIORS

Directions:
In this section, you will be provided with a number of behavioral statements that you might observe in a job situation. Please read each behavioral statement and indicate to what extent you feel that behavior is important for success as an assembler. Please rate each statement using a five-point scale ranging from a 1 indicating that the behavior is not important to success for an assembler to a 5, which indicates that the behavior is very important to success for an assembler.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Taking control in group situations in order to better achieve work goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Suggesting creative or original ideas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Remaining calm when questioned, criticized, or confronted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Maintaining a pleasant and helpful demeanor in difficult work situations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Organizing work before starting projects. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Using persuasive tactics to sway the thinking and behavior of others who initially disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Using intuition and experience to complement data. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Maintaining composure and grace under pressure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Listening carefully to explanations and getting clarification when needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Demonstrating accuracy and thoroughness in routine or boring duties. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Drawing others into conversation even when they appear disinterested. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Soliciting and considering differing options or points of view before making a decision. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Working quickly under time pressure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Exhibiting tact and consideration with even the most rude or unfriendly people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Prioritizing and planning work activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Presenting information in a convincing fashion that influences the opinions and actions of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Exhibiting sounds and accurate judgment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Working in potentially stressful work situations without feeling stressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Communicating tactfully and considerately with coworkers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20.  Attending to details in working or in planning work, to minimize glitches and possible errors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21.  Interacting with others in social situations when representing the organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22.  Maintaining competence in required job skills and knowledge | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23.  Making quick and effective decisions under stress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24.  Conveying a positive attitude to others even when they are disagreeable or rude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25.  Inspecting your own or others' work carefully to identify any potential Problems that might arise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

IMPLICIT JOB THEORY MEASURE – JOB RELEVENT PERSONALITY TRAITS

Directions:
In this section please read the trait descriptions provided below and then answer the questions that follow.  For questions one to five please use the five-point scale provided

Trait Descriptions:

Extroversion - Extroverts are sociable, they tend to prefer large groups, are assertive, active and talkative. They like excitement and stimulation and tend to be cheerful in disposition. They are upbeat, energetic, and optimistic

Openness - Individuals high in openness to experience are imaginative, aesthetic, sensitive, and attentive to inner feelings. They have a preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independent judgment. They are curious about both inner and outer worlds and their lives are experientially richer. They are willing to entertain novel ideas and unconventional values and they experience negative and positive emotions more keenly than closed individuals. Scores on openness are moderately associated with education and intellect, especially areas such a divergent thinking that contribute to creativity. Open individuals are unconventional and willing to question authority.

Emotional Stability - Compares emotional stability with neuroticism. Measures an individual's susceptibility to psychological distress. People high in emotional stability tend to exhibit calmness, even-temperament, and relaxation. Individuals with high emotional stability scores are able to face stressful situations without becoming upset or rattled. People low in emotional stability are prone to feelings of negative affect (sadness, fear, hostility, guilt), irrational ideas, less control of their impulses, and to cope more poorly with stress than others.

Agreeableness - Agreeable individuals are altruistic in nature. They are sympathetic to others and eager to help them, believing that others will be helpful in return. They are cooperative rather than competitive. They tend to be more dependent on others. They are socially well liked.

Conscientiousness - The conscientious individual is purposeful, strong-willed, and determined. This domain is also referred to as "will-to-achieve". Conscientiousness is associated with academic and occupational achievement. Individuals high on this trait are fastidious, compulsively neat, and organized. They are scrupulous, punctual, and reliable.

Questions:

1. Do you feel that the trait of extroversion is important for success as an assembler?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No, extraversion is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of extraversion is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, extraversion is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

2. Do you feel that the trait of openness is important for success as an assembler?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No, openness is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of openness is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, openness is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

3. Do you feel that the trait of emotional stability is important for success as an assembler?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No, emotional stability is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of emotional stability is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, emotional stability is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

4. Do you feel that the trait of agreeableness is important for success as an assembler?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No, agreeableness is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of agreeableness is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, agreeableness is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

5. Do you feel that the trait of conscientiousness is important for success as an assembler?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No, conscientiousness is not important for effective performance as an assembler | | The trait of conscientiousness is helpful, but not necessary for effective performance | | Yes, conscientiousness is probably the most important trait for performance as an assembler |

JOB DESCRIPTION – ASSEMBLER

# Title:              Assembler

Position overview – Basic Functions and Responsibilities

The Assembler is constantly busy and is responsible for assembling materials and installing components following specifications using either control mechanisms or direct physical activity to operate machines pr processes to produce parts and assemblies.

Primary activities

- Using hands and arms in handling, installing, positioning, and moving materials, and manipulating things.

- Monitoring materials, events, or the environment, to detect problems.

- Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.

- Talking to others to convey information effectively.

- Measures, examines, and tests completed units to detect defects and ensure conformance to specifications.

- Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself to make improvements.

Skills required

- The ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust controls of a machine or vehicle to exact positions.

- The ability to see details at close range.

- The ability to quickly move to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.

- The ability to tell when something is wrong.

- The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules.

- The ability to concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted

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