

Personality Measurement and Faking: An Integrative Framework

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ÖZET Kişilik testi yapmak, kurumsal ortamlardaki seçme kararlarında yaygın olarak uygulanan popüler bir yöntemdir. Ancak, özellikle açık olan, başka bir deyişle örtük olmayan kişilik ölçümlerinin yanıltmacılık ve tepki değiştirme gibi davranışların olumsuz etkilerine açık olabildiğini savunan bazı araştırmacılara göre, tartışmalı bir yöntemdir. Bu çalışmanın birinci amacı, Morgeson, Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy ve Schmitt'in yanıltmacılık ve tepki değiştirmeye yönelik bulgulara dayanarak, performans değerlendirmede kişilik ölçümlerinin sınırlılıklarını tartıştıkları makalelerini özetlemektir. İkinci amaç, Rosse, Stecher, Miller and Levin'in seçme kararlarında kişilik testlerinin yanıltılmasının etkilerini araştırdığı çalışmalarını ayrıntılı olarak tartışmaktır. Son olarak, örtük kişilik ölçümleri, kişilik araştırmalarında tepki değiştirmenin etkilerine yönelik çıkarımların örnekleri ve gelecekte yapılacak olan araştırmalara yönelik önermelerle birlikte tanıtmak hedeflenmiştir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER kişilik testi, seçme, yanıltmacılık, örtük kişilik ölçümleri

ABSTRACT Personality testing is a popular method that used to be commonly employed in selection decisions in organizational settings. However, it is also a controversial practice according to a number researcher who claims that especially explicit measures of personality may be prone to the negative effects of faking and response distortion. The first aim of the present paper is to summarize Morgeson, Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy and Schmitt's paper that discussed the limitations of personality testing for performance ratings in relation to its basic conclusions about faking and response distortion. Secondly, the results of Rosse, Stecher, Miller and Levin's study that investigated the effects of faking in personality testing on selection decisions will be discussed in detail. Finally, recent research findings related to implicit personality measures will be introduced along with the examples of the results related to the implications of those measures for response distortion in personality research and the suggestions for future research.

KEYWORDS personality testing, selection, faking, implicit personality measures.

INTRODUCTION

The two major criticisms about the use of personality measures in organizational settings for selection are related to their criterion-related validity and applicants' ability to fake them.¹ The advocates of the first argument suggest that personality measures do not predict job performance and the predictive validities reported in the literature are overestimated due to the correction methods used.² The second argument is that individuals

1. Joyce Hogan, Paul Barrett and Robert Hogan, "Personality Measurement, Faking and Employment Selection," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92/5 (2007).
2. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection."

are able to distort their responses on personality measures in a way that they are viewed in a more positive way by others than they actually are. The relationship between the two criticisms is outlined to a some extent in Morgeson *et al*'s paper and the authors suggested that the validity of personality tests may be affected by faking since people who are low on a trait would benefit from faking more than those who are high on that specific trait.

One of the other main discussions in the personality literature is that explicit measures of personality may be problematic and vulnerable to response distortion. The question here is “how can we assess people’s implicit theories or trait policies with explicit measures?” or, more specifically, “can we do it?” It is suggested here that implicit measures of personality may be less vulnerable to faking or response distortion. The primary aim of the present paper is to summarize Morgeson *et al*'s paper that discussed the limitations of personality testing for performance ratings in relation to its basic conclusions about faking and response distortion and Rosse, Stecher, Miller and Levin’s³ study that investigated the effects of faking on selection decisions. Secondly, recent research findings related to implicit personality measures will be introduced along with the examples of the findings related to the implications of those measures for response distortion in personality research.⁴ Finally, recent empirical and theoretical studies are summarized along with suggestions for future research.

SUMMARY OF MORGESON *ET AL*'S (2007) ARTICLE: ARE WE GETTING FOOLED AGAIN? COMING TO TERMS WITH LIMITATIONS IN THE USE OF PERSONALITY TESTS FOR PERSONNEL SELECTION

Morgeson *et al* published an article which has been inspired by a panel discussion at the 2004 Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) conference which was named as “Won’t get fooled again.”⁵ Two groups of authors who were Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran and Judge⁶ and Tett and Christiansen⁷ responded to their paper

3. Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, “The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions.”

4. James M. Le Breton, Cheryl D. Barksdale, Jennifer Robin and Lawrence R. James, “Measurement Issues Associated with Conditional Reasoning Tests: Indirect Measurement and Test Faking.”

5. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, “Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection.”

6. Deniz S. Ones, Stephan Dilchert, Chockalingam Viswesvaran and Timothy A. Judge, “In Support of Assessment of Personality in Organizational Settings,” *Personnel Psychology*, 60 (2007).

7. Robert P. Tett and Neil D. Christiansen, “Personality Tests at the Crossroads: A Response to Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy and Schmitt,” *Personnel Psychology*, 60 (2007).

and disagreed with some of their conclusions related to the limited validity of personality for predicting employee performance. This article aimed to summarize the general conclusions of the previous discussions as well as to respond to Ones *et al*'s⁸ and Tett and Christiansen's articles.⁹

One of the main conclusions of Morgeson *et al* was that their criticisms of personality testing applied only to the selection context and other research related to personality were not in the scope of their criticisms.¹⁰ Secondly, the authors maintained that the observed or uncorrected criterion-related validities of personality tests are low and their low predictive ability was demonstrated by a number of meta-analyses conducted over the fifteen years. Another point emphasized by Morgeson *et al* was that observed or uncorrected validities should not be ignored by the researchers while defending the use of personality tests for selection purposes because in the actual organizational settings practitioners do not use corrections. Therefore, they suggest that reporting corrected validities for personality measures would be misleading for practitioners in actual organizational settings. In addition, the authors strongly emphasized that in the evaluation of personality tests for selection purposes, the most important criterion should be job performance rather than other criteria such as leadership potential or job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, motivation).

In relation to faking or response distortion in personality tests, Morgeson *et al* disagreed with Ones *et al* who suggested that faking did not harm the predictive validity of personality measures. The authors stated that in actual selection contexts, applicants are motivated to present themselves in a positive light and, therefore, at least some people fake to be the "ideal applicant for the job." They mentioned some studies showing that people who were directed to fake could actually have higher scores than those who were not instructed to fake. In addition, they suggested that applicants who were informed about the traits that were measured they were more likely to fake than applicants who were not informed about the dimensions assessed. At this point, the authors acknowledge that the direct or explicit measures of personality (specifically, the Big Five) were more open to response distortion than indirect or implicit measures of personality. However,

8. Deniz S. Ones, Stephan Dilchert, Viswesvaran, Chockalingam and Judge, Timothy A., "In Support of Assessment of Personality in Organizational Settings."

9. Robert P. Tett and Neil D. Christiansen, "Personality Tests at the Crossroads: A Response to Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy and Schmitt."

10. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection."

although they mention that direct measures were more open to be faked than indirect ones, they also argued that obvious items in personality measures had higher predictive validity than subtle items for job performance. Both the predictive validity of indirect measures for performance and their vulnerability to response distortion will be discussed in the following sections with the examples of recent research findings.

In the last part of their article, Morgeson *et al* provided some suggestions for both the researchers and practitioners who use personality measures for selection purposes.¹¹ Firstly, they argued that researchers should report uncorrected validities along with corrected ones. Second, customized personality tests were mentioned. That is, Morgeson *et al* proposed that use of custom-developed personality tests for specific organizations or jobs would increase the ability of personality measures to predict job performance as well as the face validity. In addition, they argued that such a strategy might lead to high level of content validity for the specific test developed. Moreover, the authors called for the use of objective criterion measures which were based on the judgments of others than those who provided the information for the predictor measures. Finally, they suggested that researchers should employ predictive model while investigating the criterion-related (when the criterion was job performance) validity of personality tests for personnel selection purposes and should include actual job applicants rather than students in their sample.

SUMMARY OF ROSSE *ET AL*'S ARTICLE: THE IMPACT OF RESPONSE DISTORTION ON PREEMPLOYMENT PERSONALITY TESTING AND HIRING DECISIONS

Just in line with Morgeson *et al*'s last suggestion for researchers related to the use of predictive design with actual job applicants, Rosse *et al* conducted a research in which the effects of response distortion on personality measures and selection decisions in an actual organizational setting.¹²

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11. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection."
 12. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection," and Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, "The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions."

In their review of the literature related to the prevalence of response distortion in employment settings, similar to Morgeson *et al* the authors argued that job applicants were motivated to fake good in order to attain the desired outcomes. They also mentioned previous studies which found that tendency to fake the “ideal employee” was prevalent among job applicant sample but was not found with a student sample. Secondly, Rosse *et al* mentioned that item structure of the existing personality measures increased their vulnerability to response distortion. For instance, transparent or direct items as well as the positive traits used to represent the Big Five dimensions are easy to answer in a socially desirable way for most of applicants. Finally, small chance of verification of responses on personality measures makes them vulnerable for dissimulation.

In relation to effects of faking on predictive validity of personality measures, there are many studies which showed that corrections for response distortion did not improve criterion-related validities. However, Rosse *et al* did not agree with the findings of those studies and suggested that socially desirable responding has two dimensions, namely, self-deceptive positivity and response distortion.¹³ The authors argued that only the dimension of response distortion should have been used in studies assessing the effect of faking on predictive validity and they used solely this dimension in their study. Finally, the authors mentioned the statistical artifacts which may contribute to the insensitivity of correlation analysis for detecting impact of response distortion. These were “skewed distribution of response distortion, selection ratio, restriction of range and the modest validities of personality inventories.” Although faking may have little or no effects on predictive validity, Rosse *et al* emphasized that it affected decisions regarding who was hired especially when the selection ratio is low and that one of the aims of their study was to reveal that effect.

In the study, real job applicants and job incumbents constituted the sample. Whereas applicants completed the measures of personality as a part of the application process, job incumbents were told that scores on the measures would be used only for research purposes.

The first hypothesis was that response distortion scores, which were measured by Impression Management scale of Paulhus’s Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding, would be higher among the job applicants than job incumbents.¹⁴ The second hypothesis

13. Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, “The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions.”

14. Delroy L. Paulhus, *Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) Reference Manual for Version 6*, (Manual available from author at Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B. C., Canada, V6T 1Y7, 1991).

stated that the applicants' response distortion scores would show high variability and would be negatively skewed.

Furthermore, Rosse *et al* suggested that applicants' tendency to distort their responses would depend on dimension being measured as well since individuals would be more likely to exaggerate their scores on some dimensions than others especially in a job application setting.¹⁵ Therefore, they hypothesized that the applicants' response distortion scores would be most highly related to Neuroticism and Conscientiousness, moderately related to Agreeableness and Extraversion, and least related to Openness to Experience. Related to this third hypothesis, the authors suggested that applicants would score higher than incumbents on Conscientiousness, Agreeableness and Extraversion, and score lower on Neuroticism.

Since the response distortion was likely to change the rank ordering of applicants at the upper tail of the distribution of personality scores, Rosse *et al* hypothesized that top-down selection on the basis of personality scores would lead to a greater-than-chance proportion of people with high response distortion scores being selected. In addition, it is suggested that the rank order of the applicants to be hired would change when the effect of response distortion was controlled for. Finally, it is proposed that when selection ratios were low, the response distortion scores of individuals hired using uncorrected personality scores would be significantly higher than those of who would be hired using adjusted scores.

Participants were 197 job applicants and 73 incumbents of a property management firm. Job applicants were applying for the same positions that job incumbents had. Both the applicants and incumbents completed a modified version of NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R; Costa and McCrae)¹⁶ and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Version 6 (BIDR-IM, Paulhus).¹⁷ Whereas job applicants completed the measures as a part of multiple-step selection process, the incumbents completed the inventory during work hours and they were assured that their scores would not be available to their supervisors.

The results showed that job applicants had significantly higher scores on response distortion than job incumbents. In line with the hypothesis 2, the authors found that

15. Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, "The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions."

16. Paul Costa and Robert R. McCrae, *Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) Professional Manual* (Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992).

17. Delroy L. Paulhus, *Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) Reference Manual for Version 6*.

response distribution of response distortion scores of applicants was negatively distributed. As expected, response distortion scores correlated most highly with Neuroticism and Conscientiousness scores, moderately with Agreeableness scores, and less than moderately with Extraversion (which was less than expected), and they were not related to Openness to Experience scores. In addition, applicants scored higher than incumbents on Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness and scored lower than incumbents on Neuroticism. As expected, as the selection ratio decreased the chance of hiring those who have extreme scores on the response distortion measure (when the criterion personality variable was Conscientiousness) increased. As hypothesized, at selection rates lower than 50% response distortion had a significant effect on who would be hired and, as authors showed by statistical illustration, hiring using the adjusted scores would significantly decrease the level of response distortion. Finally, the response distortion scores of people hired using unadjusted personality scores was significantly higher than those of individuals who would be hired using adjusted scores when the selection ratios were low.

Rosse *et al* discussed that their results showed that job applicants in actual settings were likely to engage in response distortion.¹⁸ That is, they showed that job applicants' response distortion scores were significantly higher than job incumbents who completed the same measures. Moreover, they found significant variance in response distortion and argued that this variance might be the reason of changes in the rank ordering of applicants and low validity and utility of personality scores. In addition, the differences between job applicants and incumbents on certain personality characteristics were unlikely to be due to actual or real differences, rather, they were more likely to reflect situational differences in demand characteristics. The authors also discussed the meaning of the robust correlations between NEO-PI-R scores and response distortion scores. They suggest that these findings might have implications for construct validity of personality measures and that at least for job applicants; the personality scores should be adjusted. One issue that the authors raised for future research was the possibility that individuals with extreme response distortion scores may show other ways of dishonesty. Rosse *et al* also suggested future researchers to replicate their findings with bigger sample sizes and with the samples that would include individuals who were more familiar with the personality tests than those in their sample.¹⁹ One of the points made by both Morgeson *et al* and Rosse *et al* was the fact

18. Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, "The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions."

19. Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, "The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions."

that job type might be a moderator between the faking or socially desirable behavior and job performance.²⁰ That is, both articles came up with the conclusion that for some jobs tendency to behave in a socially desirable manner might be related to higher performance on the job. To illustrate, Rosse *et al* suggested that for jobs that included transitory and superficial interpersonal relationships sensitivity to social cues and ability to act in a socially desirable way might increase performance and it would be related to other variables like customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, related to explicit measurement and faking, both Morgeson *et al* and Rosse *et al* concluded that personality measures can be faked and individuals were motivated to fake personality measures especially in selection contexts.²¹ Rosse *et al* showed that in an actual selection context, job applicants were likely to distort their responses and they were more likely to score higher than job incumbents on certain personality dimensions. The authors provided some discussion about the construct validity as well as vulnerability to response distortion of an explicit measure of personality they used (i.e., NEO-PI-R). Morgeson *et al* also mentioned that explicit measures of personality were more open to be faked than implicit measures. In the next section, some of the research findings related to implicit measures of personality and faking will be discussed.

IMPLICIT MEASURES OF PERSONALITY AND RECENT FINDINGS RELATED TO FAKING

Industrial and Organizational (I/O) psychology research mostly relied on explicit measurements of psychology and dominated by studies that employed survey design.²² However, there are recent attempts to introduce implicit measures to the field, especially for the measurement of personality. Implicit measures are designed to indirectly (rather than directly) assess unconscious components of personality.²³

20. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection."

21. Frederick P. Morgeson, Michael A. Campion, Robert L. Dipboye, John R. Hollenbeck, Kevin Murphy and Neal Schmitt, "Are We Getting Fooled Again? Coming to Terms with Limitations in the Use of Personality Tests for Personnel Selection," and Joseph G. Rosse, Mary D. Stecher, Janice L. Miller and Robert A. Levin, "The Impact of Response Distortion on Pre-Employment Personality Testing and Hiring Decisions."

22. Brian C. Frost Chia-Huei E. Ko and Lawrence R. James, "Implicit and Explicit Personality: A Test of Channeling Hypothesis for Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92/5 (2007).

23. James M. LeBreton, Cheryl D. Barksdale, Jennifer Robin and Lawrence R. James, "Measurement Issues Associated with Conditional Reasoning Tests: Indirect Measurement and Test Faking."

To illustrate, James introduced the new measure called Conditional Reasoning Test (CRT) which is defined as a test attempted to reveal whether unconscious motives were instrumental in shaping a person's behavior.²⁴ It is based on an inductive reasoning problem in which respondents were asked to determine which general conclusion follows most reasonably from a set of premises. More specifically, CRT assesses whether responses based on "personality-driven implicit cognitive biases are logically appealing to respondents." Respondents are required to find logical answers to the problems presented and along with two logical answers, two illogical answers are included in each problem.

Another implicit measure is Implicit Association Test which uses a chronometric procedure.²⁵ It is designed to reveal cognitive representations that are not assessed by explicit measures and to measure personality self-concept. It includes a computerized task in which participants classify specific stimuli as "me," "not me" and "others." Participants of this task are informed to respond to the stimuli as soon as possible and the reaction times which were in milliseconds were used in scoring the test. The assumption is that individuals respond to the trait words that are inherent in their personalities more quickly than others.

In the literature, there are few but promising studies that investigated the relationship between implicit measures of personality and faking. To illustrate, Asendorpf, Banse, and Mücke assessed the self-concept of shyness using IAT and employed a design in which one group of participants were instructed to fake and the other group was instructed to be honest.²⁶ They found that IAT was relatively independent of explicit measures and it was less vulnerable to response distortion than traditional self-ratings. Similarly, Schnabel, Banse, and Asendorpf used both IAT and a similar procedure named Implicit Association Procedure (IAP) and the same "fake/not fake" conditions.²⁷ They found that explicit measures were highly correlated with social desirability and that indirect measures of IAT and IAP were more robust against faking than explicit measures. LeBreton,

24. Lawrence R. James, "Measurement of Personality via Conditional Reasoning," *Organizational Research Methods*, 1 (1998).

25. Anthony G. Greenwald, Debbie E. McGhee and Jordan L. K. Schwartz, "Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74 (1998).

26. Jens B. Asendorpf, Rainer Banse and Daniel Mücke, "Double Dissociation between Implicit and Explicit Personality Self-Concept: The Case of Shy Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (2002).

27. Konrad Schnabel, Rainer Banse and Jens Asendorpf, "Employing Automatic Approach and Avoidance Tendencies for the Assessment of Implicit Personality Self-Concept: The Implicit Association Procedure (IAP)," *Experimental Psychology*, 53/1 (2006).

Barksdale, Robin, and James used Conditional Reasoning Tests for Aggression (CRT-A) and they found that when the aim of the assessment was not disclosed the CRT-A was resistant to faking.²⁸

McDaniel, Beier, Perkins, Goggin, and Frankel assessed whether or not implicit measures of personality could be faked when the participants were instructed to do so in a repeated measures design.²⁹ In addition, the validity of these measures was investigated. The results showed that, in line with the hypothesis, participants were able to fake even the implicit measures of self-concept. However, they were not able to fake the IAT subscale of conscientiousness, although they could fake the subscale of extraversion.

In a more recent study, Siers and Christiansen collected self-report and IAT measures of the personality traits of extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability as well as peer ratings of traits and supervisor ratings of job performance.³⁰ The findings revealed that the explicit self-ratings of traits assessed and IAT ratings had low convergence. Moreover, the correlations between supervisory reports of job performance and IAT ratings were not significant. The authors argued that, although their results had limited external validity, the use of IAT measures might not have convenience to a large extent in applied settings.

In conclusion, there are a number of attempts in relation to development and validation of implicit measures of personality. Although the number of studies is limited in the field, some researchers showed that implicit measures reliably assess individual differences on certain personality variables (e.g., shyness, aggression, conscientiousness), they are partly independent from explicit measures, and they are less likely to be vulnerable to response distortion than explicit measures are. Future studies are encouraged to assess predictive validity and reliability of the existing implicit measures in different contexts and in relation to different organizational outcomes.

28. James M. LeBreton, Cheryl D. Barksdale, Jennifer Robin and Lawrence R. James, "Measurement Issues Associated with Conditional Reasoning Tests: Indirect Measurement and Test Faking."

29. Max J. McDaniel, Margaret E. Beier, Andrew W. Perkins, Stephen Goggin and Brian Frankel, "An Assessment of the Fakeability of Self-Report and Implicit Personality," *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43/4 (2009).

30. Brian P. Siers and Neil D. Christiansen, "On the Validity of Implicit Association Measures of Personality Traits," *Personality and Individual Differences*, 54/3 (2013).

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