

Predicting Individual Score Elevation in an Applicant Setting: The Influence of Individual Differences and Situational Perceptions

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Previous research has indicated that applicants can increase their scores on non-cognitive measures by half of 1 standard deviation (e.g., Rosse, Stecher, Miller, & Levin, 1998; Viswesvaran & Ones, 1999). Two influential factors have been proposed to influence this elevation: individual differences and situational influences (e.g., Douglas, McDaniel, & Snell, 1996). The current study examined how individual differences and motivation (expectancy theory) predicted individual response elevation from a general to a job applicant context using a conscientiousness measure. Results indicated that elevation was primarily predicted by emotional stability, instrumentality, and the interaction between expectancy and instrumentality. Practical implications and future research directions are discussed.

Non-cognitive tests—which include biodata, personality, and integrity—have seen resurgence as tools used in selection systems (e.g., Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). For many years following a warning issued by Guion and Gottier (1965), non-cognitive measures fell out of favor. However, with the advent of the Big Five organizing framework (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992), researchers and practitioners have again recognized the value of using personality tests in a selection setting. These tests are relatively easy to administer, are rather inexpensive, and tap important dimensions relevant to job performance not captured with a cognitive ability test. For example, personality tests—specifically, conscientiousness tests—have been shown to be predictive across jobs (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991).

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Despite these positive reasons for including a personality test in a selection system, some have argued that questions on these tests are transparent, resulting in vulnerability to response distortion by applicants (e.g., Alliger, Lilienfeld, & Mitchell, 1996). *Response distortion*, or faking, refers to an applicant's effort to make himself or herself appear more qualified for the job by inflating responses (e.g., Rosse, Stecher, Miller, & Levin, 1998). Faking appears to be a valid concern, as many studies (both laboratory and field) have shown that applicants can and do increase their scores by as much as 1 standard deviation (e.g., Rosse et al., 1998; Viswesvaran & Ones, 1999). As a result of this increase, the utility of personality tests may be affected, such as a reduction in criterion-related validity (e.g., Mueller-Hanson, Heggstad, & Thornton, 2003), a change in the factor structures of the measure (e.g., Schmit & Ryan, 1993), and a reduction in the quality of applicants selected (e.g., Rosse et al., 1998).

Most of the research on response distortion has attempted to improve the practical outcomes associated with personality testing (e.g., applying correction formulas, Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999; administering warnings, Dwight & Donovan, 2003). Few studies have examined the response-distortion construct from a theoretical perspective. Research into the mechanisms behind response distortion has relied primarily on conjecture. For example, Douglas, McDaniel, and Snell (1996) identified three factors that contribute to response distortion: opportunity to fake, personal characteristics, and situational factors. Snell, Sydell, and Lueke (1999) expanded this simple model of faking and posited that motivation and the ability to fake direct successful faking, with both personal and situational factors influencing the process. Similarly, McFarland and Ryan (2000) identified a model of response distortion, highlighting the importance of beliefs toward faking, situational influences, and intention and ability to fake. However, no study has simultaneously examined the predictive strength of personal and situational factors in explaining score elevation. The current study fills this gap in the extant literature by examining individual score elevation in a simulated applicant setting.

Individual-Difference Perspective

Researchers have argued that identification of an applicant's standing on measures of individual differences may be a useful tool in understanding and predicting response distortion. For example, in a within-subjects design, McFarland and Ryan (2000) instructed individuals to answer honestly and fake good. An analysis of these personality factors indicated that neuroticism and a low standing on integrity and conscientiousness were predictive of faking behavior.

These results echo those of Ones, Viswesvaran, and Reiss (1996), who found that emotional stability (i.e., the positive pole of neuroticism) and conscientiousness were related to social desirability scores. Based on these results, it appeared that individual differences impact an applicant's ability to and success in distorting responses. While understanding the contributing factors of response distortion is important, few practical implications arise from their research. Emotional stability may be relevant to and predictive of job performance (e.g., Saldago, 1997), but profiling and rejecting applicants based solely on their standing on emotional stability as an indicator of response distortion is not feasible (ethically or legally). A more practitioner-oriented approach involves an examination of situational factors that contribute to response distortion.

Situational Factors Perspective

Few studies have examined the impact of the situation on an applicant's level of response distortion. A notable exception is the success of warnings of detection or consequence. Specifically, in a study conducted by Dwight and Donovan (2003), an analysis of selection decisions indicated that more correct hires were made when warnings were provided. The effectiveness of warnings has also been supported with biodata items (Kluger & Colella, 1993).

The two aforementioned studies provide empirical evidence that cues embedded in the situation can reduce the amount of applicant response distortion and improve the quality of selection decisions, which has been proposed theoretically by a number of researchers (e.g., Douglas et al., 1996). For the most part, warnings appear to be one of the only situational factors studied. However, in terms of situational cues, applicant motivation has been acknowledged to likely influence the level of response distortion (e.g., Dwight & Donovan, 2003; Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990; McFarland & Ryan, 2000; Snell et al., 1999). However, no study has yet to examine the effects of a situational manipulation of motivation on response distortion.

One such theory for explaining the power of situational cues on applicant behavior is expectancy or VIE (valence, instrumentality, and expectancy) theory (Vroom, 1964). VIE theory was recently integrated with the selection process with the development and validation of a measure aimed at assessing an applicant's desire to attain the job (valence), belief that scoring highly on the selection test will result in hiring (instrumentality), and expectation that expending effort will result in a high score on the test (expectancy; Sanchez, Truxillo, & Bauer, 2000).

The Current Study

There are two main explanations for response elevation that have been proposed in the literature (e.g., Douglas et al., 1996; McFarland & Ryan, 2000): individual differences and situational influences. These perspectives are tested in the current study as explanations for response elevation on a conscientiousness measure. As this is the first study to examine individual differences and situational perceptions simultaneously, we made no predictions regarding relative contribution to prediction of within-person response elevation.

This focus on situational factors as a means to influence response distortion has many practical advantages. Organizations can control the amount and type of information given to applicants, thereby potentially influencing their desire to distort responses. The current literature has focused mainly on identifying predictors of response distortion (e.g., neuroticism; McFarland & Ryan, 2000; Ones et al., 1996). While this may be theoretically meaningful, understanding what personal characteristics contribute to response distortion does not provide the practitioner with tools to limit the problem. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by examining how perceptions of situational factors, as well as individual differences, influence individual response elevation in an applicant setting.

Method

Participants

Study participants were 195 working undergraduate students at a large midwestern public university who received extra credit for their participation. To be eligible for participation, individuals had to be currently employed at least 10 hours per week. Experimental setting conscientiousness data were collected from 332 participants, after distributing approximately 850 surveys (39% response rate). Of those 332 Phase I participants, 195 returned for participation in Phase II (58.7% return rate).

The largest proportion of the sample was female (71.3%), White (82.1%), sophomores in college (35.4%), and employed in the retail/service industry (49.2%). Participants' mean age was 23.8 years ($SD = 6.9$), and they reported working an average of 24.7 hours per week ($SD = 10.9$). Participants' tenure at their current job was an average of 29.1 months ($SD = 34.8$); while their average tenure in the workforce was 7.6 years ($SD = 6.5$).

Measures

Phase I conscientiousness predictor measure. Experimental setting conscientiousness was first assessed using Goldberg's (1999) International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), which includes 20 items such as "I am always prepared." The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). For ease of interpretation, this scale was recoded prior to analysis, such that a higher score indicates a higher level of conscientiousness. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .89$).

Phase II conscientiousness measure. Conscientiousness was again assessed at least 2 weeks later, following administration of the motivation manipulation (details of manipulation are discussed later). Items for this administration of the measure were placed in a work-related context (e.g., "I am always prepared at work"). This was done to differentiate items from the experimental setting measure. Previous studies have shown that responses to a non-cognitive measure changed depending on the context, with less error variance resulting from responses in context, thus resulting in higher validity (Robie, Schmit, Ryan, & Zickar, 2000). When administered in an applicant setting, internal consistency was slightly reduced ($\alpha = .87$).

Situational factor: Motivation. The primary situational variable, motivation, was operationalized using Sanchez et al.'s (2000) Valence Instrumentality Expectancy Motivation Scale (VIEMS). The 10-item VIEMS uses a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Items were reverse-coded prior to analysis to ease interpretation of the scale scores.

The Valence scale contains three items measuring attractiveness of the job (e.g., "I would like to be hired for this job"). Internal consistency for this scale was .95. The Instrumentality scale consists of four items measuring perceptions of the likelihood of being hired (e.g., "I think I will be hired if I get a high test score"). Internal consistency estimates for this study were similar to published findings ($\alpha = .88$). Expectancy was measured with three items relating to level of effort put forth on the selection test (e.g., "I can get a good score on this test if I put some effort into it"). Internal consistency for this scale was .92.

Emotional stability. Emotional stability, or the positive end of neuroticism, was assessed using Goldberg's (1999) 20-item scale from the IPIP. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). To ease interpretation, all items were reverse-coded, such that a high scale score indicates higher standing on emotional stability. Reliability of this measure was .91.

Extraversion. Extraversion was measured using Goldberg's (1999) 20-item scale. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Reliability of the scale was .91.

Positive and negative affect. Positive and negative affect have been proposed as both trait (e.g., Watson & Clark, 1984) and state (e.g., Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) measures of mood. At the trait level, these measures related to both extraversion and neuroticism (e.g., Tellegen, 1985). These measures have been shown to be relatively independent of one another, with high reliability (i.e., .88 for positive affect and .87 for negative affect, in general). The 20-item measure asks respondents to identify the extent to which they generally feel a certain way on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). The internal consistency of both scales was acceptable (positive affect, $\alpha = .87$; negative affect, $\alpha = .86$).

Integrity. We used 25 items from Ryan and Sackett's (1987) integrity/honesty test. Of these items, 21 reflected attitudes toward theft, and 4 questions were aimed at identifying those who were responding in a socially desirable manner. Items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). Low scores indicate higher levels of integrity. Internal consistency reliability for this measure was acceptable (.82).

Procedure

Data were collected in two phases. The first phase was an experimental set of context-free surveys that were completed via the Internet. The second phase was a laboratory session in which the job-related information was delivered at least 2 weeks following the Internet survey completion.

In Phase 1, individuals completed a 20-item, non-cognitive measure of conscientiousness via the Internet at least 2 weeks prior to experimental manipulation data collection to provide initial standing on the measure. There were two advantages associated with using the Internet in that it allowed participants to complete the measure at a convenient time and provided situational fidelity, as organizations are using the Internet increasingly to administer initial screening devices.

The experimental setting measure of conscientiousness used context-free instructions (i.e., "Answer these questions about yourself"), rather than context-specific instructions (i.e., "Answer these questions about yourself at work"). Results have shown that responses to a non-cognitive measure change depending on the context, with less error variance resulting from responses in context, thus resulting in higher validity (Robie et al., 2000). In Phase 2, which followed at least 2 weeks later (4 weeks, on average), individuals were given the job advertisement, following which a measure of context-laden conscientiousness was administered. Demographic information was collected at the end of the session.

Participants were given a job advertisement for the Open Book, a fictitious café/bookstore that was hiring for general retail workers. This job scored highest as the most realistic and representative of what college students would look for in a part-time/full-time job in pilot testing. The job advertisement manipulated valence (making the job appear attractive by emphasizing salary and benefits, a cooperative and fun working environment, and the first opportunity to schedule lucrative holiday hours), instrumentality (link between success on the predictor measure and being hired, manipulated by emphasizing scoring highly on this measure as the only screening device utilized beyond a simple interview), and expectancy (connecting effortful work with success on the measure, manipulated by reminding applicants that paying attention and trying hard should lead to success on the screening device).

Results

Examining Potential for Response Bias

In order to examine if there were systematic differences between those who continued on to each stage of the research (i.e., completed only Phase I, completed both Phase I and II, matched with supervisor and completed Phase I and II), a series of univariate ANOVAs was conducted on variables of predictive interest. Specifically, group differences in experimental setting conscientiousness, simulated applicant setting conscientiousness, valence, instrumentality, and expectancy yielded no significant differences. These results indicate that there were no potentially biasing factors within the final group of analysis (Phase I and II, matched with supervisors) that could lend to their predictive ability in the following analyses. There were no significant differences in those who participated in final data collection versus those who dropped out in the previous collection stages.

Establishing Differences: Experimental Setting Versus Simulated Applicant Responding

An investigation of experimental versus simulated applicant conscientiousness scores reveals that during Phase II, participants were responding as job applicants. There was a large standardized difference (Cohen's $d = 1.21$) between experimental setting and simulated applicant responses (hereafter referred to as *applicant responses*). It is this experimental setting to applicant conscientiousness difference that the following analyses seek to explain.

Initial conscientiousness scores were partialled out of all analyses, thus the remaining score indicates inflation or change from initial experimental setting scores.

Predicting Individual Response Inflation: Individual Differences

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for the individual-difference measures under investigation. As expected, scores on the various personality measures were correlated with both experimental setting and simulated applicant conscientiousness. Interestingly, emotional stability was not related to experimental setting, but was significantly related to applicant conscientiousness ($r = .24, p < .01$). Scores on the Instrumentality and Expectancy scales were positively related to applicant conscientiousness scores ($r = .25, p < .001$; and $r = .21, p < .001$, for instrumentality and expectancy, respectively). Valence, or attractiveness of the job, was not significantly related to applicant conscientiousness ($r = .13, ns$).

A series of regression analyses was performed to understand better how individual-difference variables contributed to mean-level elevation from experimental to applicant settings on a measure of conscientiousness. All predictors were centered prior to computing the interaction term (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991). Response inflation was predicted by emotional stability ($\beta = .20, p < .05$), which replicated McFarland and Ryan (2000) and Ones et al.'s (1996) individual-difference results. However, in the current study, high levels of emotional stability were related to response elevation. Unlike the results from McFarland and Ryan, integrity was not a significant predictor of applicant conscientiousness, controlling for initial conscientiousness responses ($\beta = -.10, ns$). Extraversion was also examined as a potential individual-difference predictor of response inflation, but it did not significantly predict applicant conscientiousness scores (it was marginally significant; $\beta = .13, ns$).

Similarly, a series of regressions was performed to examine the effects of a more global personality construct (i.e., positive and negative affect) on applicant conscientiousness. Positive affect was positively, significantly predictive of applicant conscientiousness ($\beta = .17, p < .05$). This significant effect mirrors the marginally significant extraversion effect. Contrary to previously reported empirical results, negative affect, which is similar to low emotional stability, was not significant ($\beta = -.04, ns$). These results indicate that higher applicant conscientiousness scores were predicted only by high positive affect.

When all significant individual-difference predictors were examined together (i.e., positive affect and emotional stability), only emotional stability

Table 1
Means, Correlations, and Reliabilities for Individual-Difference and Situational Perception Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Individual-difference variables												
1. Integrity ^a	2.45	0.50	(.82)									
2. Positive affect	3.78	0.62	-.17*	(.87)								
3. Negative affect	1.87	0.64	.22**	-.18*	(.86)							
4. Emotional stability	3.36	0.62	-.22**	.30**	-.67**	(.91)						
5. Extraversion	3.49	0.62	-.02	.41**	-.27**	.33**	(.91)					
Conscientiousness												
6. Experimental setting ^b	3.88	0.47	-.21**	.32**	-.17*	.12	.14	(.89)				
7. Applicant	4.38	0.35	-.18*	.29**	-.13	.24**	.18**	.40**	(.87)			
Motivation variables												
8. Valence	3.62	1.05	-.21**	.29**	-.13	.24**	.18**	.02	.13	(.95)		
9. Instrumentality	3.37	0.78	-.08	.16*	-.12	.13	.15*	.03	.25**	.31**	(.88)	
10. Expectancy	3.72	0.94	-.30**	.00	.06	-.11	.09	.07	.21**	.24**	.57**	(.92)

Note. N = 195.

^aLower score indicates higher level of integrity. ^bN = 379.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

remained predictive ($\beta = .17, p < .05; \Delta R^2 = 4\%$). Positive affect was marginally significant, but only contributed an additional 1% of explained variance ($\beta = .12, ns$). Overall, these results indicate that those higher in emotional stability were more likely to elevate responses in an applicant setting.

While emotional stability was predictive, the percentage of variance accounted for was rather low (3.9%). This level of prediction indicates that other factors were contributing to the elevation of responses that occurred between experimental setting and simulated applicant administrations of the conscientiousness measure. We believe that situational factors will likely explain variance in individual response elevation. The results of these analyses will be presented here.

Predicting Within-Person Response Inflation: Situational Factors

Perceptions of situational factors—namely, the individual's interpretation of the valence, instrumentality, and expectancy regarding the simulated job—were investigated as a potential predictor of individual response elevation from experimental setting to the applicant setting. In order to examine these relationships, the motivation variables were examined individually (e.g., valence, instrumentality, and expectancy scale scores) and in combination with one another (e.g., V-I, motivational force models; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996). In all analyses, valence, instrumentality, and expectancy were examined using the same process: Each was used to predict applicant conscientiousness after controlling for experimental setting responses. As mentioned previously, all predictor variables were centered prior to analysis (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991).

In the first regression, experimental setting (initial) conscientiousness was entered at the first step as a control variable, followed by valence, instrumentality, and expectancy scale scores (mean) in the next three successive steps. At the final step, the results indicate that only the instrumentality scale was a significant predictor of applicant conscientiousness ($\beta = .20, p < .05$). Next, the combinations of the cognitive choice terms were examined (i.e., interactions: Valence \times Instrumentality; Instrumentality \times Expectancy; Expectancy \times Valence). In these regressions, experimental setting conscientiousness was entered at Step 1, followed by the cognitive choice variables of interest (e.g., valence, instrumentality). The interactions were entered at the final step.

Only a single two-way interaction was significant: Instrumentality \times Expectancy ($\beta = .17, p < .01$). This mirrored the significant bivariate relationships shown between applicant conscientiousness and the instrumentality and expectancy scales. Figure 1 displays this significant interaction. For those with

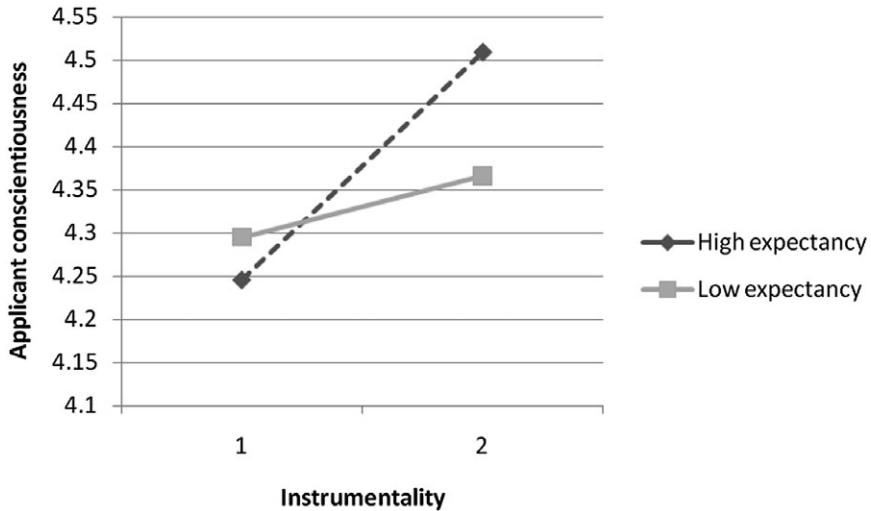


Figure 1. Expectancy by instrumentality interaction with simulated applicant conscientiousness.

a high level of expectancy, there was a positive relationship between instrumentality and applicant conscientiousness scores. However, for those with low expectancy, the relationship between instrumentality and applicant conscientiousness scores was essentially constant. Response elevation appeared to be at its highest for those individuals who believed that expending effort on the selection test would result in a high score (i.e., expectancy) and that a high score would lead to securing the job (i.e., instrumentality).

Relative strength of individual difference and perceptions of situational factor predictors of response inflation. Significant predictors of response inflation were detected by examining individual differences in personality, as well as perceptions of situational factors. Previous researchers have proposed that both of these factors are important in understanding response inflation. However, no study has compared their relative contribution to the prediction of response inflation in an applicant setting. Predictors entered into this model were significant in the final step of regressions presented earlier, such that when considered with other similar predictors (e.g., personality variables), these variables significantly explained variance in applicant inflation. In Step 1, experimental setting conscientiousness, emotional stability, and valence and instrumentality were entered. In Step 2, the interactions between emotional stability and valence and instrumentality were entered, followed by the interaction between valence and instrumentality. All of the variables were centered prior to entering.

Table 2 presents these results. When examined together, emotional stability, instrumentality, and the interaction between expectancy and instrumentality were significant. This model predicted approximately 26% of the variance in simulated applicant conscientiousness scores, after controlling for experimental setting (initial) scores, an increase in 23% with the inclusion of the situational factors. Of note, the interaction between expectancy and instrumentality remained significant, added an additional 3% of variance explained, and remained in the same direction, as shown in Figure 1. Taken

Table 2

Regression Results of Individual-Difference and Situational Factors Predicting Response Elevation

	β	t	R^2	ΔF
Step 1			.22	13.59***
Experimental setting conscientiousness	.37	5.81***		
Valence	.05	0.76		
Instrumentality	.15	2.17*		
Emotional stability	.17	2.49*		
Step 2			.24	2.29
Experimental setting conscientiousness	.37	5.81***		
Valence	.05	0.69		
Instrumentality	.18	2.59**		
Emotional stability	.16	2.49*		
Emotional Stability \times Instrumentality	.14	2.18*		
Emotional Stability \times Valence	-.02	-0.23		
Step 3			.27	6.38**
Experimental setting conscientiousness	.37	5.76***		
Valence	.03	0.44		
Instrumentality	.21	3.01**		
Emotional stability	.18	2.75**		
Emotional Stability \times Instrumentality	.10	1.53		
Emotional Stability \times Valence	-.02	-0.29		
Expectancy \times Instrumentality	.17	2.53*		

Note. $N = 194$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

together, these results provide support for the importance of situational perceptions and personality in predicting response inflation.

Discussion

Two potential explanations were explored for the individual score elevation on conscientiousness from experimental setting to the simulated job applicant setting: individual differences and perceptions of situational factors. The results indicate a positive relationship between emotional stability and response inflation, which contradicts previous empirical findings (e.g., McFarland & Ryan, 2000). Integrity, extraversion, positive affect, and negative affect were not predictive of response inflation. These results provide evidence that individual differences—specifically, emotional stability—were predictive of response elevation in an applicant setting.

The results of an examination of the perception of situational factors—namely, the belief that doing well on a selection test will result in hiring (i.e., instrumentality), and the interaction between instrumentality and the belief that effort will result in a high test score (i.e., expectancy)—positively predicted applicant conscientiousness scores. The main effect for instrumentality indicates that drawing a connection between explaining the selection system, or how individuals are selected for hire, may serve as motivation to inflate scores. The interaction between expectancy and instrumentality demonstrates that individuals who believe that effort is the key to success on a selection test (i.e., expectancy), coupled with an understanding of how performing well on the selection test will lead to hiring (i.e., instrumentality), were most likely to increase their scores in the simulated applicant setting.

When individual differences and situational factors were examined together, support primarily emerged for the perceptions of situational factor variables. The situational factors of instrumentality and the interaction between instrumentality and expectancy remained predictive; emotional stability was also significant. Situational factors contributed the most unique variance to the prediction of response elevation from experimental setting to an applicant setting on conscientiousness items (23% for situational factors vs. 3% for individual-difference factors).

Implications for Managers and Human Resource Professionals

The importance of situational factors in the prediction of individual response elevation in an applicant setting beyond individual differences is good news for the practitioner interested in limiting the deleterious effect of response distortion. These results suggest that practitioners can

highlight information that limits a high perception of instrumentality (linking performance on the test with hiring) and expectancy (link between effort and scoring well) in order to mitigate the effect of response distortion.

With respect to the results for the influence of instrumentality on response elevation, human resource practitioners should not provide complete details regarding the use of the non-cognitive measure in the context of the selection battery. This is not to say that no information should be provided to the applicant. Instead, the applicant should be given limited information regarding the direct impact of any specific measure in the selection battery on hiring decisions. Those tests that applicants see as more important or relevant to the hiring decision are the tests on which we would expect to see greater response inflation, based on the results of the present study. By withholding information about the importance of any single test and providing applicants with no clues regarding which predictors are most heavily weighted, our findings indicate that the applicant should be less motivated to inflate responses.

By implementing these relatively simple changes to the recruitment and initial screening process, the organization has the opportunity to increase the accuracy of information about the applicant's traits and behaviors. This increased accuracy could have a considerable effect on the training and development opportunities offered, as well as the placement of the individual in workgroups or departments. This increased accuracy may lead to a decrease in turnover behaviors (e.g., absenteeism, withdrawal), resulting in significant savings to the organization. Future research should examine the bottom-line impact of response distortion.

Limitations and Future Research

This study was conducted in a laboratory with a simulated job, which likely affects the generalizability of the results. However, all participants were currently working a minimum of a part-time job, which should mitigate concern over their representativeness to the general population. These relationships should be examined in the field with actual job applicants, especially in light of the importance of applicants' motivation to secure the job. Even though these were not actual applicants, the level of response distortion that occurred in this study was similar and, in some cases, even greater than that found in field studies (e.g., Rosse et al., 1998). The high level of response distortion with this laboratory sample demonstrates that participants were acting as applicants.

Future research should investigate these relationships with a field sample in order to determine the relative contribution of situational factors and individual differences. It would be instructive to determine if these relation-

ships exist in other populations or were simply sample-specific. Future research should also test the ability to fake as an important factor in selection. Another fruitful avenue for research would be to investigate the influence of other situational perceptions and the ability to inflate scores.

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