# Effects of Self-Presentation Strategies on Personality Profiles and Their Structure

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*To examine the claim that self-presentation distorts the structure of personality dimensions, 370 subjects were asked to respond as job applicants to a measure of the Big Five personality traits and two measures of socially desirable responding (SDR): Self-Deceptive Enhancement and Impression Management. They were randomly assigned to respond using one of seven strategies: fake the best possible candidate, fake good without arousing suspicion, play up your good points, respond honestly, be modest, fake bad without arousing suspicion, fake worst. The SDR scales and the Big Five were highly intercorrelated under all strategies except honest responding. Further analyses suggested that the high intercorrelations were due to outliers, not to a true convergence of dimensions. It was concluded that self-presentation can either inflate or deflate intercorrelations among evaluative scales. Self-presentation in individuals was best diagnosed by the Impression Management and Conscientiousness scales.*

There is a growing consensus about the fundamental dimensions of personality and how to measure them (Goldberg, 1993; John, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1985). It is bothersome, nonetheless, that most personality scales can be faked if respondents are given explicit instructions to do so (e.g., Furnham, 1990). Although such faking studies do not reveal how much self-presentation typically occurs in assessment situations, they can be useful in evaluating the susceptibility of a measure to self-presentation as well as in estimating cutoff points for respondents with improbably high or low scores (e.g., Lanning, 1989). Potentially, such data could be used to improve further the validity of measures that are administered under "honest" conditions—that is, those with little demand for self-presentation.

Particularly informative, though rare, are studies of the effects of faking on personality profiles. Profile studies permit the analysis of differential susceptibility to faking of a set of scales. An ideal choice of profiles is the Big Five, given the convincing evidence that these dimensions form the core of individual differences in personality (Goldberg, 1993; John, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1985). Moreover, currently available Big Five measures exhibit impressive stability and validity under standard testing conditions—that is, conditions that encourage honest self-disclosure.

Given that the desirable pole of each dimension is undisguised, however, respondents should be able to fake the Big Five at will. Indeed, there is already evidence that respondents can fake very specific Big Five profiles if told what type of job application they are simulating (e.g., Paulhus & Bruce, 1991). As yet, however, no information is available on the impact of a global self-presentational set (e.g., "Try to look good") on the Big Five profile.

## CORRELATIONAL STRUCTURE

It is difficult enough to identify and control a main effect of self-presentation (e.g., Paulhus, 1991). But there is also scattered evidence that self-presentation does hidden damage by inflating the correlations among evaluative dimensions. Wiggins (1959) demonstrated this effect among a set of socially desirable responding (SDR) measures. Specifically, all measures became more

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positively correlated under fake-good instructions. Inflations in correlations have also been found among normal personality dimensions (e.g., Dunnett, Koun, & Barber, 1981; Johnston, 1991) and among dimensions of psychopathology (Helmes & Holden, 1986). Finally, a similar correlational inflation has been observed between personality dimensions and SDR measures (Gorman, 1968; Johnston, 1991; Michaelis & Eysenck, 1971; Rump & Court, 1971).

Given this evidence, it seems reasonable to predict that the Big Five—also evaluation-laden dimensions—will become highly correlated as self-presentation becomes more positive (Costa & McCrae, 1989b; McCrae & Costa, 1989, p. 435). There is also some suspicion that negative self-presentation has similar effects on correlational structure, but the evidence is mixed (Dunnett et al., 1981; Johnston, 1991).

Note, however, that predicting an increase in correlations under self-presentation seems paradoxical: Given that all respondents should be shifting toward the extreme positive pole, the variance on all dimensions should diminish (Edwards, 1957, pp. 55-56). Such a restriction of range is well known to *reduce* correlations among variables. According to this reasoning, both positive and negative self-presentation should reduce intercorrelations among the Big Five.

Resolution of this paradox seemed to us to be prerequisite to understanding how to deal with multidimensional self-presentation effects.[1] Therefore, in the present study, we examined self-presentational effects by instructing subjects to respond to a self-report inventory at one of seven levels of positivity. To replicate the Wiggins (1959) result, we included measures of the two major dimensions of SDR, which are known to be relatively uncorrelated under standard administration conditions. To extend the analysis to substantive personality measures, we included measures of the Big Five traits. The primary goals were twofold: (a) to examine the profiles and structure of the SDR and Big Five measures under varying strategies of self-presentation and (b) to determine the sensitivity of these seven measures in detecting respondents' strategies.

## METHOD

*Subjects.* A total of 370 undergraduate students (160 men and 210 women; mean age 21.2 years) at a large research university participated for extra course credit. They were given a packet of questionnaires to complete at home.

*Materials.* The package included the Five Factor Inventory (FFI; Costa & McCrae, 1989a), a 60-item measure of the Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness). Responses were collected on the standard 5-point Likert-type scales; hence scores on each trait can range from 0 to 48.

Also included was the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1984, 1989), whose subscales are designed to assess the two major factors of SDR. The Self-Deceptive Enhancement (SDE) scale was designed to tap self-deceptive overconfidence (e.g., "My first impressions of other people are always right"). The Impression Management (IM) scale was designed to measure the deliberate tendency to present oneself favorably ("I don't gossip about other people's business"). Again, 5-point Likert-type scales were used to collect the data, but scores were converted according to the standard scoring procedure (Paulhus, 1989). That is, only extreme responses are counted: On the SDE, a point was given for each response of 5; on the IM, a point was given for each 4 or 5. Hence total scale scores could range from 0 to 20 for each measure. For detailed reliability and validity data, see Paulhus (1989, 1991).

*Self-presentational strategies.* All respondents were asked to respond as if they were applying for an unspecified job. They were randomly assigned to one of six self-presentation conditions or the control group. Ordered from most to least positive, the self-presentational instructions were *fake best* ("Fake the best candidate"), *fake good* ("Fake good without arousing suspicion"), *play up* ("Play up your good points"), *fake modest* ("Be somewhat modest in your answers"), *fake bad* ("Fake bad without arousing suspicion"), and *fake worst* ("Fake the worst possible candidate"). Control (*honest*) subjects were told to "respond honestly." To inflate the size of the control group, random assignment was qualified so that three subjects were assigned to the honest condition for every one assigned to any other group.

*Self-reported tactics.* The last page of each inventory was an open-ended question about self-presentational tactics: "Please write down details about the tactics you used in responding to this questionnaire."

## RESULTS

*Control group.* Consider first the results for the control group (i.e., honest responding). The means and standard deviations were as follows: Extraversion, 30.1 (6.7); Agreeableness, 30.5 (6.3); Conscientiousness, 29.5 (6.7); Neuroticism, 24.3 (6.4); Openness, 30.3 (6.7). These values closely resemble previous means on college students (Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990). Such consistency provides some assurance that our sample is a representative one.

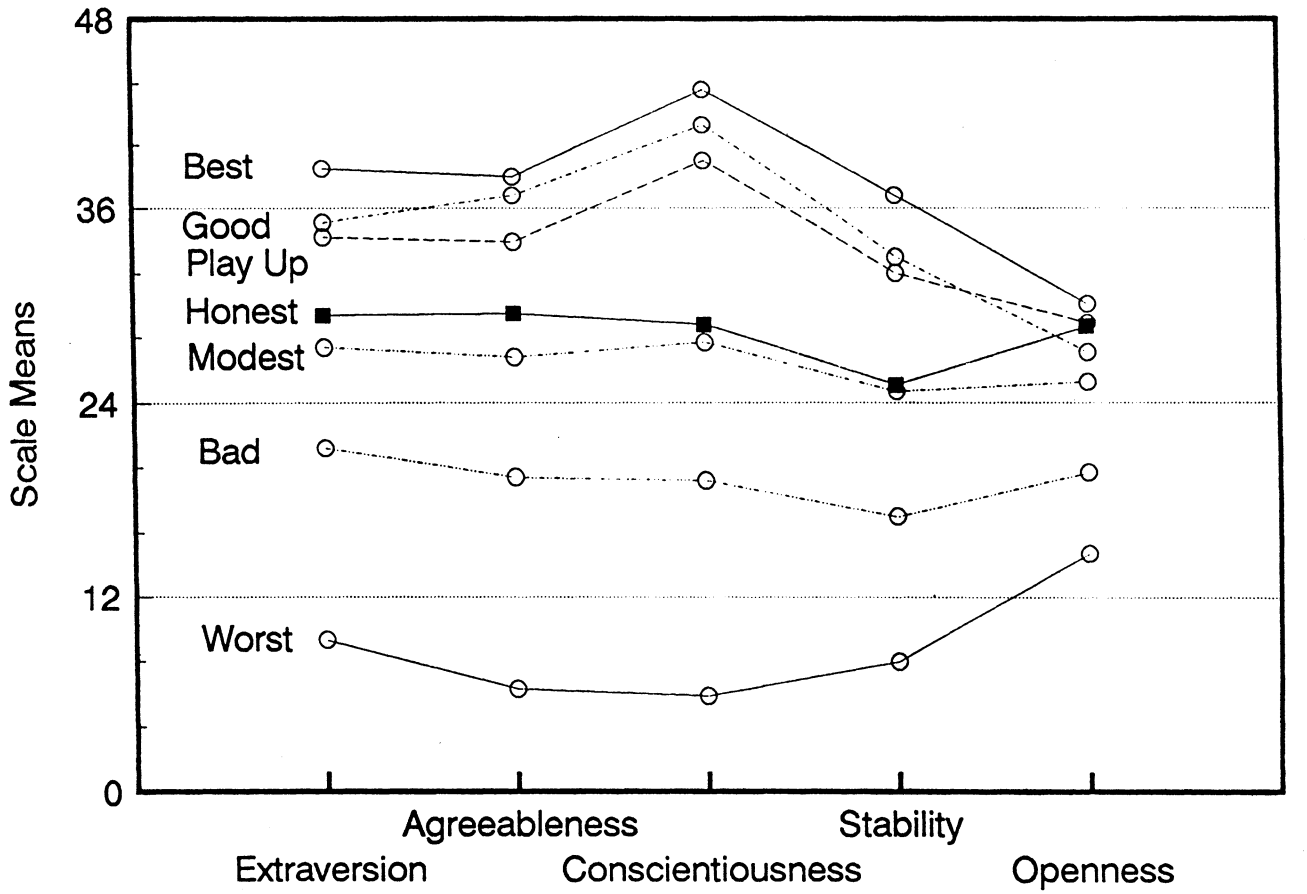


**Figure 1: Big Five profiles for various self-presentation strategies.**

*Profiles.* The Big Five means for all seven conditions are presented as profiles in Figure 1. To facilitate interpretation of the profile changes, Neuroticism was reverse-scored and labeled Emotional Stability. All five factors, therefore, are now scored in the desirable direction. In short, higher scores in the figure always represent more positive self-presentations.

It is clear that, with the exception of Openness, the profiles rise in parallel from fake worst to fake best. The honest profile falls closest to the fake-modest strategy. Of the Big Five, Conscientiousness seems to be the most and Openness the least responsive to the strategies. Openness responds only to negative self-presentation. Figure 2 presents the profiles of the two SDR scales. Note first that the IM scale means line up perfectly with the strategies. Again the honest condition is closest to the fake-modest condition. The SDE scale was rather insensitive to the strategy instructions: The differences are small and show no coherent order.

*Profile sensitivity tests.* Results of statistical tests of profile differences are displayed in Table 1. The value reported for the Big Five is the mean across all five dimensions.

The asterisks in the table indicate strategy means that are statistically different from the mean in the honest condition. Note that all Big Five and IM means reached significance except fake modest (smallest $t = 1.88$, $p < .05$). None of the SDE means reached significance.

Another statistical index of a sensitivity to strategy is obtained by rank-ordering the seven strategies (e.g., fake worst = 1; honest = 4; fake best = 7). A high correlation between a respondent's strategy and his or her score on a personality scale verifies that the strategies are having an impact and that this particular scale is sensitive to the impact. The resulting correlation of $r(368) = .43$ between strategy and Big Five mean is impressive considering that it is watered down by variation within strategies.

Of the eight individual scales, the IM scale was the most sensitive index, $r(368) = .76$; Conscientiousness was next highest, $r(368) = .55$. In contrast, the SDE scale was relatively insensitive, $r(368) = .33$. Of course, given the large sample size, all these values are highly significant ($p < .001$). The IM correlation, however, was significantly higher than that of the next-best indicator, Conscientiousness, $t(368) = 7.99$, $p < .01$.

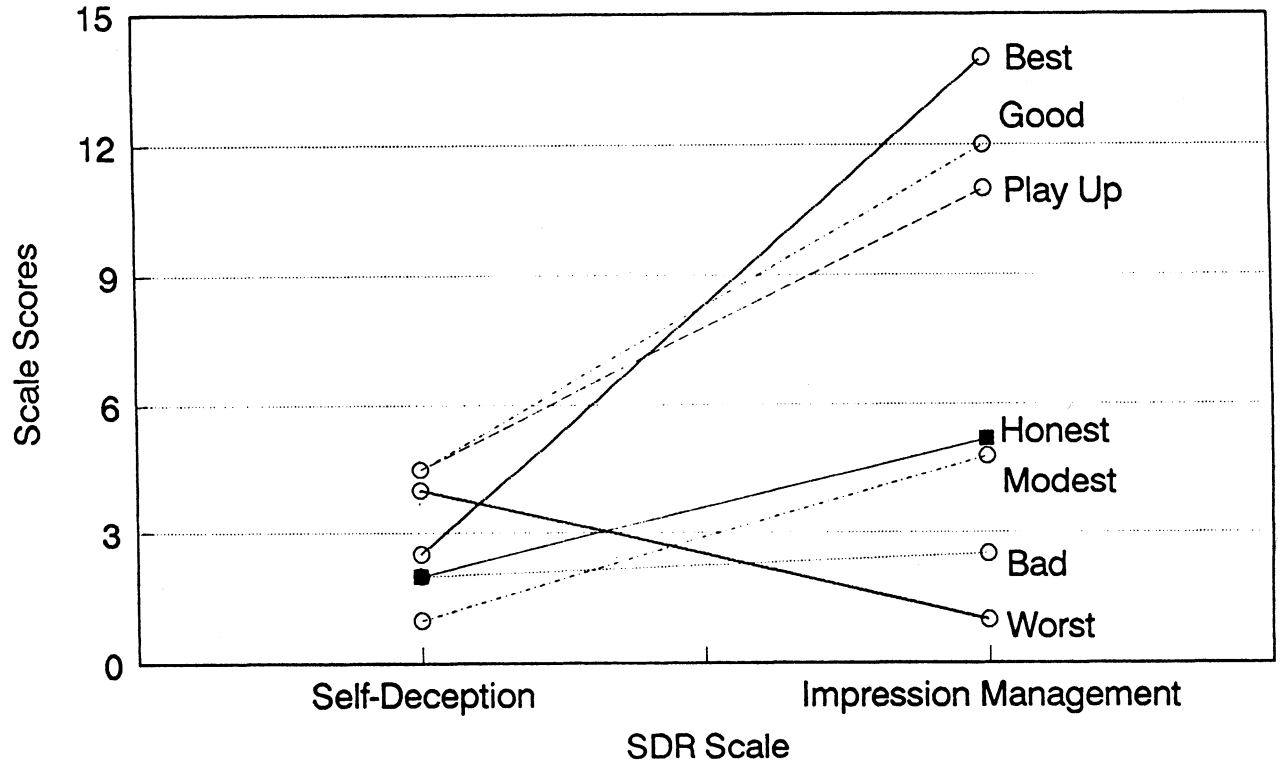


**Figure 2: Socially desirable responding (SDR) scale profiles for various self-presentation strategies.**

*Regression.* Lanning (1989) used a regression approach to determine the optimal linear combination for predicting whether a respondent was faking. He regressed all the available scales in the battery (in his case, the California Personality Inventory) against the faking strategy criterion (in his case, only fake good vs. honest). Following his approach, we regressed the 7-point strategy index on the five FFI scales. As expected from the profile results above, Conscientiousness had the highest beta. The multiple correlation (corrected for shrinkage) was an impressive .75—approximately the same as the simple correlation with the IM scale.

*Intercorrelations.* In Table 2, the mean intercorrelations among the dimensions are reported separately for the Big Five and SDR scales. Data columns 1-2 provide the mean intercorrelations before any outliers were removed. The intercorrelations of the Big Five were higher in all faking conditions than in the honest condition, and four of the differences reached significance at .05.

Among the SDR measures, two conditions—the most positive two—showed significantly higher intercorrelations than in the honest condition. This pattern replicates previous studies showing increased correlations under positive self-presentation (e.g., Wiggins, 1959). The correlations did not reach significance for any of the three negative strategies.

We also calculated the cross-correlation between each SDR measure and the Big Five mean. To simplify the analyses, we pooled all the positive strategies and all the negative strategies. The correlations of IM with the Big Five mean were .60, .51, and .12 for the positive, negative, and honest conditions. For the SDE, these same correlations were .38, –.03, and .13. Again, IM appeared to be more sensitive than SDE to changes in Big Five profiles.

*Variances.* The variances of the Big Five in each condition were examined. When averaged across the Big Five, the mean variances were as follows: best, 8.8; good, 10.1; play up, 9.1; honest, 6.5; modest, 6.8; bad, 9.3; worst, 10.8. In short, self-presentation increased the variance of Big Five variables rather than restricting their range.

*Outlier analyses.* The increased variances under self-presentation led us to suspect the presence of outliers. We proceeded, therefore, to examine the effects of deleting outliers using two distinct techniques for defining outliers. First, we examined the tactics sheets—the last sheet of the inventory, requesting details about how the respondent had gone about faking the responses. Respondents' comments showed that a small number in each faking condition had failed to understand the instructions—that is, they reported that they had responded honestly. Apparently they had skipped or ig-

**TABLE 1: Performance of the Big Five and Socially Desirable Responding (SDR) Measures Under Varying Self-Presentation Strategies**

| | | Mean | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Condition* | n | *Big Five* | *SDE* | *IM* |
| Fake best | 48 | 37.1* | 2.7 | 14.1* |
| Fake good | 44 | 34.7* | 4.7 | 12.0* |
| Play up | 49 | 33.6* | 4.7 | 10.8* |
| Be modest | 17 | 28.1 | 1.1 | 5.1 |
| Fake bad | 37 | 18.3* | 2.1 | 2.5* |
| Fake worst | 43 | 9.2* | 4.3 | 1.2* |
| Honest | 132 | 28.9 | 2.1 | 5.3 |

NOTE: SDE, Self-Deceptive Enhancement; IM, Impression Management; both can range from 0 to 20. Big Five scores can range from 0 to 48.
*Mean differs from the honest mean at $p < .05$ (one-tailed).

nored the cover sheet assigning them to one of the faking strategies and proceeded directly to the questionnaire items.

Examination of the scatterplots revealed how these outliers had induced high correlations. Under fake-best instructions, for example, most respondents scored high on all the Big Five—in other words, they followed the instructions. Four respondents, however, scored moderately on all five traits—enough to create a high intercorrelation among all measures. In the negative self-presentation conditions, the combination of a few moderates with the majority scoring low on all scales yielded a similar high positive correlation.

After these outliers were eliminated, the correlations among the Big Five as well as the SDR measures fell to near zero. Table 2 reveals a similar pattern for the other faking conditions. Data columns 3-5 contain the number of outliers found for each group and the scale intercorrelations. After outliers were dropped, the mean correlation among the Big Five (across six self-presentation strategies) fell from .47 to .04.

Standard significance tests for such drops in correlations are problematic because the "before" group consists of the same subjects as the "after" group plus a few outliers. Instead, following Glass and Hopkins (1984), we developed confidence intervals (C.I.s) around each of the mean intercorrelations in data columns 4 and 5—that is, the outlier-free distributions of *r*. We then calculated whether the original correlation (i.e., with outliers included) was outside the C.I.

In Table 2, a superscript *a* in columns 4-5 indicates that the outliers-in correlation falls outside the 95% C.I. for that outlier-free correlation. For example, in the fake-best condition, the 95% C.I. for the outlier-free correlation (.06) is calculated as the retransformed value of z (.06) ± (1.96) $[1\sqrt{(48-3)}]$ (Glass & Hopkins, 1984, p. 306). This confidence interval (.23, .35) does not include the before (outliers-in) correlation (.48). (Nor does this interval include the mean of the four correlations obtained when the outliers were included one by one.) This result held for Big Five correlations in all conditions and SDR correlations in the positive faking conditions. In general, then, outlier-free intercorrelations were significantly lower than the original correlations.[2]

Our second operationalization of "outlier" was a statistical one. As recommended by Stevens (1986), we used the Mahalanobis distance to identify multivariate outliers in each of our seven distributions. Using two standard deviations as the cutoff, we found a total of 33 outliers. Data columns 6-8 of Table 2 provide the number of outliers by condition and the scale intercorrelations. Not surprisingly, most of the outliers identified here were the same ones identified by examining the tactics sheets. Hence, when these outliers were deleted, the intercorrelations again approached zero. A superscript *a* in columns 7-8 indicates correlations whose 95% C.I. does not include the outlier-in distribution. Note that conditions where the outliers make a significant difference are identical to those in columns 4-5, which were identified using the first deletion criterion—the tactics sheets. Hence, our conclusion about the effects of outliers is doubly supported.[3]

## DISCUSSION

*Profile analyses.* Self-presentation strategy had a clear effect on the Big Five profiles: The positivity of the profile rose steadily from fake worst to fake best. Of the Big Five, the strongest effect was on Conscientiousness scores: The seven means were spread across virtually the full range of the scale. This acute sensitivity of Conscientiousness is understandable given the context of a job application simulation: Conscientiousness would be the most obvious quality on which to self-present—particularly because the nature of the job was not specified. Agreeableness was also responsive, although the mean score never rose above 39 out of 48. Examination of the self-reported tactics suggested that the source of this "ceiling" was a hesitance about appearing too compliant.

Openness showed the least clear effect—only the two most negative strategies were distinguishable from the other five. Apparently the desirability of Openness-related traits for an unspecified job is more ambiguous than that of the other Big Five dimensions. Examination of the specific items as well as the self-reported tactics page of the inventories confirmed this suspicion: Subjects split on whether they viewed a strong interest in poetry and abstract ideas as desirable or not.

The profile information presented here may be useful for researchers using Big Five measures, particularly the FFI. By matching the mean profile obtained in a particu-

**TABLE 2: Correlations Among Sets of Scales Before and After Outliers Were Deleted**

| | | | *Deletion Criterion* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Before Deletion* | | *Reported Tactic* | | | *Statistical Distance* | | |
| *Condition* | *Big Five* | *SDR* | *Number of Outliers* | *Big Five* | *SDR* | *Number of Outliers* | *Big Five* | *SDR* |
| Fake best | .48* | .64* | 4 | .13[a] | −.01[a] | 6 | .05[a] | −.08[a] |
| Play up | .62* | .29 | 3 | −.01[a] | .01[a] | 5 | −.14[a] | −.11[a] |
| Fake good | .34 | .53* | 3 | −.07[a] | −.09[a] | 3 | −.07[a] | −.09[a] |
| Be modest | .32 | −.08 | 1 | .19 | −.11 | 2 | .15 | .09 |
| Fake bad | .49* | .14 | 5 | −.10[a] | −.05 | 5 | −.10[a] | −.05 |
| Fake worst | .55* | .11 | 4 | .12[a] | .01 | 5 | .06[a] | .01 |
| Honest | .19 | .18 | 0 | .19 | .18 | 7 | .12 | .08 |

NOTE: The Big Five set comprises the five scales from the Five Factor Inventory. The SDR (socially desirable responding) set comprises only the two Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding scales: Self-Deceptive Enhancement and Impression Management.
a. Removing outliers produced a significant drop in correlation.
*The correlation is significantly greater ($p < .05$) than in the honest condition.

lar experimental situation with those in Figure 1, researchers may infer the operation of self-presentation in that situation. One must be careful, of course, about inferring self-presentation in a single respondent, because there is normal variation in the control group. Hence, we refer the reader to the standard deviations in the control group, provided at the beginning of the Results section.

Admittedly, the profiles obtained here are most informative for samples and contexts similar to ours—that is, college students applying for an unspecified position. Had the position been specified, the self-presentation profile would have depended closely on the nature of that position (see Paulhus & Bruce, 1991; Velicer & Weiner, 1975). Moreover, completely different families of profiles are expected in other self-presentation contexts—the dating situation, clinical assessment, and so on.[4] We encourage other researchers to develop such profiles for the most common assessment situations.

*Correlational structure.* Results in the control ("Respond honestly") condition replicated the usual low intercorrelations among the Big Five measures (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1989a) and between the two major types of SDR measures (e.g., Paulhus, 1986; Wiggins, 1959). Under all self-presentation conditions, however, the Big Five showed substantial intercorrelations. Thus, at first blush, the Big Five appear less discriminable under self-presentation demand.

The results also replicated Wiggins's (1959) finding that correlations between SDR scales were inflated under positive faking strategies. Our extension to negative faking strategies did not show similar inflations, however. Given the absence of significant differences in Table 1, the explanation seems to be that the SDE scale is unresponsive to self-presentation demands. Hence, any correlations with SDE are unlikely to inflate.

We pursued this possibility by calculating correlations between the SDR measures and the Big Five measures. These analyses revealed that the IM scale, but not the SDE scale, showed inflated correlations with the Big Five mean under all self-presentation conditions. Again, this pattern supports the view that the SDE scale is more resistant to self-presentation effects.

The resistance of the SDE scale may be traceable to a scoring system designed to tap only exaggerated positivity—that is, awarding a point only for a 5 on a 5-point scale. When we rescored the SDE using the same cutoff as the IM, the data showed inflated intercorrelations of SDE and IM for all self-presentation conditions, including negative strategies. Hence, the unique scoring system for the SDE was indeed responsible for the original pattern. As far as we know, no other SDR scale has been specifically designed with such an extreme cutoff (see Paulhus, 1989, 1991). We must conclude that typical SDR scales *will* show correlational inflation under positive and negative strategies.

*True convergence or outlier contamination?* To track down the source of the inflated intercorrelations, we pursued the possibility of outlier effects. We discovered from the self-reported tactics sheets that a small number of subjects in each faking condition had failed to follow the instructions. Examination of the scatterplots and Mahalanobis distances revealed that these same respondents were clear outliers. With these outliers eliminated, the correlations among the Big Five as well as the SDR measures fell to near zero. In short, the high intercorrelations observed under self-presentation conditions are misleading, that is, they do not reflect a true convergence of dimensions. The paradox raised in the introduction (p.101) is thus resolved: Although self-presentation can artifactually inflate intercorrelations, after decontamination, a deflation relative to the control

group is more likely because of the restriction in range due to a ceiling effect.

The term *decontamination* seems applicable here because the outliers do not belong in the strategy groups—if anything, they belong in the control group. Most of these subjects wrote or implied on the self-reported tactics sheet that they had responded honestly. Apparently they did not read or did not understand or did not care about the instructions. Other "nonresponsive" outliers may have other explanations. Some subjects may feel that moderate responses are the best way to look good. Others may be too moralistic or rigid to agree to faking. In all these cases, it is the residual honest respondents who are the outliers.

It is the converse case, however, that most worries personality researchers: Under low demand conditions (e.g., anonymity), some subjects may fake good anyway. Such subjects may suspect that they can actually be identified. Even a small subgroup of such high scorers will induce the usual correlational inflation. At the other pole, a small group of malingerers is similarly problematic.

*Implications.* Our results constitute further evidence that the utility of personality scales diminishes under self-presentation conditions. The traditional concern has been that self-presentation will inflate the positivity of content scores. Well-known techniques have been developed to correct individual scores (see Paulhus, 1991). The present results indicate a more insidious consequence—hidden damage to group-level analyses because of outliers. Because they are based on the correlation matrix, any multivariate analyses (e.g., regression, factor analysis) will suffer from multicollinearity (i.e., redundant dimensionality). We suspect that the research literature contains many such misleading multivariate analyses. Experimental studies involving the induction of self-presentation are prime suspects.

Unfortunately, these problems extend to any self-report inventory indexing multiple forms of positivity. For example, inventories of attitudes and values should suffer the same fate: They are likely to be less discriminating under high demand for self-presentation.

If unusually high intercorrelations are noticed, our strong recommendation is to examine the joint scatterplots of the highly correlated variables. This is an ideal way to detect potential outliers. Unfortunately, deletion of extreme, but valid, scores will also reduce intercorrelations—but inappropriately so. Hence, confirmation (with statistical or a priori criteria) of the status of each outlier is necessary lest babies be thrown out with the bathwater.[5]

The contaminating effect of self-presentation on factor intercorrelations has direct implications for applied assessment situations. Although our study was conducted as a simulation on college students, the same correlational inflation has been found in a real job application situation (Michaelis & Eysenck, 1971). Similarly, applicants hoping to qualify for a donor program showed higher intercorrelations than a control group (Rump & Court, 1971). Apparently the correlational inflation effect operates whether the self-presentation motivation arises from specific instructions or real-world situational demand.

In sum, we have demonstrated how self-presentation can induce inflated correlations. We found no evidence, however, that convergence of dimensions was the source of this inflation. Instead, its source seems to be the unwitting pooling of subjects with different self-presentation strategies.[6] Once interlopers are removed to create a homogeneous strategy group, intercorrelations in self-presentation conditions will tend to drop because of restricted range.

*Diagnosing SDR in groups.* We conclude that a distorted correlational structure—inflated or deflated—can be diagnostic of self-presentation. Although many methods of detecting self-presentation are available (for the most recent review, see Paulhus, 1991), we could find no published recommendation that scale intercorrelations be used as a diagnostic tool. The primary application seems to be in evaluating the self-presentation demand in specific groups or settings. If the within-group correlations of evaluative scales differ substantially across groups, then between-group differences in self-presentation are a potential source.[7]

*Diagnosing SDR in individuals.* Note that the diagnostic value of intercorrelations does not extend to identifying self-presentation in individuals, because the necessary correlations require a sample of subjects. Certain individual difference indicators, however, were successful in this study. The Impression Management (IM) scale of the BIDR confirmed its utility as an SDR measure (Paulhus, 1991): It was very sensitive to changes in self-presentation strategies in our job application simulation. Hence, it may be useful in personnel selection situations to detect extreme self-promoters and malingerers. As in previous studies, the SDE scale was not as susceptible to faking as the IM (Booth-Kewley, Rosenfeld, Edwards, & Alderton, 1992; Paulhus, 1984). The Conscientiousness scale also proved to be hypersensitive to self-presentation condition. The value of this scale, however, may not extend beyond the job application setting.

*Coda.* Our results do not bear directly on the issue of validity in typical industrial-organizational measurement situations. Indeed, validity is well established for the Big Five in occupational settings (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Studies of self-presentation in high-demand selection

situations, however, show mixed results. Some evidence suggests that self-presentation has no effect on validity (Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990), whereas other evidence indicates that validity is compromised (e.g., Birenbaum & Montag, 1989; Butcher, 1979; Holden & Jackson, 1981). A third view suggests that although substantial self-presentation does occur, it does not nullify the ability of personality tests to select good candidates (Cunningham, Wong, Barbee, & Turcott, in press). The present study, rather than addressing validity effects directly, warns that a distorted correlational structure may be indicative of self-presentation effects.

## NOTES

1. For example, there are implications for the question of how many distinct dimensions of SDR exist. If SDR measures truly converge under self-presentation, the implication is that any SDR measure will do.

2. Use of the standard C.I. assumes multivariate normality of the original data. Hence, we also calculated the distributions by bootstrapping the outlier-free distribution (see Lunneborg, 1985). All the mean outlier-in correlations still fell outside the 95% C.I.

3. Given the fallibility of any single deletion criterion, the convergence of the two patterns is reassuring.

4. Paulhus (1992) has gone so far as to argue that positivity has no absolute meaning in self-presentation: It can be defined only with respect to specific goals and specific self-presentational targets.

5. Note that the standard administration form for the FFI ends with the question "Did you respond honestly to the questions?" Subjects giving "no" responses should be dropped before correlations are calculated. (Of course, there is no guarantee that subjects engaging in self-presentation will respond honestly to that question.) In a sense, our tactics sheet was simply an amplified version of the standard FFI honesty question.

6. To make this point even more strongly, in an ancillary analysis, we pooled the data from all seven strategies (without the outliers) and calculated the mean intercorrelation of the Big Five. The result was a whopping mean intercorrelation of .83. In real-world samples, of course, it is unlikely that such a range of strategies could be found in the same sample.

7. An inference of SDR from correlational inflation does not mean that all the data are meaningless. It simply means that the subgroups differing in self-presentation must be treated separately.

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