# Character traits in the workplace: A longitudinal study of moral and immoral organizational behaviors

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# Work Experiences and Character Traits (WECT) Project

- Three-month weekly online diary study of employed U.S. adults.

- Goal is to investigate how character, personality, emotions, and treatment by managers and coworkers affect the frequency with which workers engage in ethical and unethical behavior at their jobs
  - *Ethical work behaviors:* Organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., helping coworkers with work and personal responsibilities, coming in early or staying late without pay)
  - *Unethical work behaviors:* Counterproductive work behaviors (e.g., verbally or physically abusing co-workers, stealing from one's employer).

- Research is at the intersection of social/personality psychology and organizational behavior.
  - Create bridges between psychological research on morality and management science research on behavioral business ethics and workplace deviance.

- WECTProject.org

# The WECT Project

14 surveys over the course of three-months + a coworker survey

- **Initial survey** (approx. 60 to 75 minutes)
  - assessed demographic characteristics, personality, character, moral reasoning, and work environment
- **12 weekly surveys** (approx. 20 to 30 minutes)
  - assessed participants' emotions, work experiences, and work behaviors.
- **Final survey** (approx. 45 to 60 minutes)
  - Similar to initial survey (except moral reasoning)
- **Invited coworker to take a survey** (approx. 45 to 60 min)
  - assessed coworkers' judgments of participants' personality, character, and work behaviors;
  - also assessed coworkers' personality, character, and work behaviors

# Key Research Questions

- What personality and situational factors predict ethical/unethical work behaviors?
  - What is the incremental validity of different factors?

- Are character traits stable over time?
  - How does the stability of character traits compare to other traits?

- Are character traits observable by coworkers?
  - How accurate are observer-reports and self-reports?

- How do emotions relate to character traits and to ethical/unethical work behaviors?
  - What is the incremental validity of emotions versus moral reasoning in predicting work behaviors?

- *These are just a few of the many possible questions we will be able to address with these data. Suggestions welcome!*

# Project Design

- o Participants were members of an online panel administered by Qualtrics Labs, Inc. and their subcontractor, the survey research firm Survey Sampling International (SSI).
- o Two data collections
  - o *WECT2011*: September 2011 to December 2011
  - o *WECT2012*: January 2012 to April 2012

- o Both studies had the same design, but there was a sampling problem in WECT2011, which necessitated WECT2012 (a new sample.
  - o Unbeknownst to us, participants who missed a survey were not invited into subsequent surveys.
  - o Problem discovered in week 10. In remaining weekly surveys and final surveys everyone was sent the survey link.
  - o Sampling problem addressed in WECT2012

# Recruitment & Eligibility

- o The survey research firm contacted panel members with an invitation to participate in a study examining people's experiences at work.

- o *Eligibility requirements:*
  - o 18 years or older
  - o Have full-time employment (working 35 or more hours per week).
  - o Consent to complete a 30-minute online survey each week for 12 weeks, as well as an hour-long initial survey and final survey
  - o Invite a co-worker to take a survey in week 4 of the study

- o Participants received a total of $53 in WECT2011 and $37 in WECT2012 if they completed all the surveys (otherwise partial compensation)
  - o Coworkers received a giftcard to an online retailer ($20 in WECT2011 / $15 in WECT2012).

# Participants

- Participants in the WECT Project are a diverse group of 1,515 American adults.
  - Live in all 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia
  - Ages range from 18 to 71 years ($M$ = 39.32, $SD$ = 11.37)
  - Half are women ($n$ = 757 female participants).
  - Race/ethnicity: White (75.2%), Black (9.2%), Hispanic (5.5%), Asian (3.6%), and other / multi-racial (6.3%) participants

- **Employment**: private for-profit company (67%), non-profit organization (11%), local government (6%), state government (6%), federal government (3%), self-employed (8%), working without pay (0.2%)
- **Income**: *Range* = $0 (care-giver for elderly) to $750k (doctor);
  - *Median* = $44k; $M$ = $53k; $SD$ = $44k;

| Survey | WECT 2011 Ns | WECT 2012 Ns | TOTAL Ns |
|---|---|---|---|
| Initial Survey | 1020 | 495 | 1515* |
| Weekly 1 | 723 | 380 | 1103 |
| Weekly 2 | 639 | 369 | 1008 |
| Weekly 3 | 590 | 329 | 919 |
| Weekly 4 | 480 | 280 | 760 |
| Weekly 5 | 451 | 320 | 771 |
| Weekly 6 | 440 | 319 | 759 |
| Weekly 7 | 409 | 266 | 675 |
| Weekly 8 | 383 | 302 | 685 |
| Weekly 9 | 369 | 284 | 653 |
| Weekly 10 | 623 | 288 | 911 |
| Weekly 11 | 608 | 263 | 871 |
| Weekly 12 | 658 | 258 | 916 |
| Final Survey | 542 | 303 | 845 (56% of initial sample) |
| Coworker Survey | 215 | 126 | 341 (23% of initial sample) |

*In addition to the 1,515 participants in the WECT Project, 75 others completed surveys but were purged from the files for providing bad data (e.g., random strings of letters).

# Surveys

# Measures – Initial Survey

○ The initial survey began with a description of the project.

○ Participants were instructed that the survey contained five sections, each of which would take 15-30 minutes to complete. Breaks were permitted.

1. *Section 1 contained a demographic questionnaire, followed by a job description questionnaire.*

2. *Section 2 contained individual difference questionnaires related to character and personality.*

3. *Section 3 contained work questionnaires.*

4. *Section 4 contained individual difference questionnaires related to character.*

5. *Section 5 contained a test of moral reasoning.*

# Initial Survey - Section 1

*Initial Survey Section 1 contained a demographic questionnaire, followed by a job description questionnaire.*

- **Job title, job description and duties, job start date**
- **Number of hours worked** (past week and typically)
- **Income**
- **Hours of sleep on average work and non-work nights**
- **Worker class** (e.g., employee of a private company or the government – adapted from U.S. Census)
- **Occupational classification**
- **Organization size**
- **Work group size**
- **Number of people supervised**
- **Whether there is a formal ethics code that is enforced**
- **Organizational fusion** (pictorial item adapted from Swann, Gomez, Seyle, Morales, & Huici, 2009)
- **Job satisfaction** (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983)
- **Quality of job alternatives & job investment size** (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers, & Mainous, 1988)
- **Organizational descriptors** (bipolar adjective pairs) (e.g., competitive vs. cooperative)
- **Intention to turnover** (looked for new job during past week, will look in next 3 months, will look in next year)

# Initial Survey - Section 2

*Section 2 contained individual difference questionnaires. Items within each questionnaire were randomized for each participant. The first three measures were presented in a randomized order for each participant. The last two measures in this section were also presented in a randomized order for each participant.*

- **Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale** (GASP; Cohen, Wolf, Panter, Insko, 2011)
- **HEXACO Personality Inventory-60 Items** (HEXACO-PI-R-60; Ashton & Lee, 2009)
- **Brief Self-Control Measure** *[this scale was not included in WECT2011]* (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004)
- **Conflict Templates Scale** *[this scale was not included in WECT2011]* (Halevy, Cohen, Chou, Katz, & Panter, 2012 under review)
- **Future Self-Continuity Scale** [for 3 months and 10 years] (Ersner-Hershfield et al., 2009)
- **Satisfaction with Life Scale** (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffen, 1985)
- **Revised Everyday Discrimination Scale** (R-EDS; Stucky et al., 2011)

# Initial Survey – Section 3

*Section 3 contained work questionnaires. The order in which the scales were presented and the order of the items within each scale were randomized for each participant.*

- **Work Design Questionnaire** (Morgeson, & Humphrey, 2006) – 77 items
  - Work scheduling autonomy, decision-making autonomy, work methods, autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job, job complexity, information processing, problem solving, skill variety, specialization, social support, initiated interdependence, received interdependence, interaction outside organization, feedback from others, ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions, equipment use
- **Organizational Commitment Scale - Short Form** *[affective and normative commitment only]* (Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006)
- **Perceived Organizational Support** *[8-item version]* (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986)
- **Procedural justice subscale from Organizational Justice Scale** (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998)
- **Perceptions of Politics Scale** *[general political behavior and go-along-to-get-ahead items subscales only]* (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997)
- **Organizational Constraints Scale** (Spector & Jex, 1998)

# Initial Survey – Section 4

*Section 4 contained individual difference questionnaires related to character. The order in which the scales were presented and the order of the items within each scale were randomized for each participant.*

- **Interpersonal Reactivity Index** (IRI*) [Empathic Concern and Perspective Taking subscales only]* (Davis, 1980)
- **Self-Importance of Moral Identity** (Aquino & Reed, 2002)
- **Ethics Position Questionnaire** (EPQ;  Forsyth, 1980)
- **Consideration of Future Consequences Scale** (CFC; Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994)
- **Exploitativeness/Entitlement dimension from Narcissism Personality Inventory-16**  (NPI-16; Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006)
- **Machievellianism  IV** (MachIV) *[not included in WECT2011]*  (Christie & Geis, 1970)

# Initial Survey – Section 5

- *Section 5 contained a test of moral reasoning / cognitive moral development.*
- **Defining Issues Test 1 (DIT1) – Short Form** *[3 dilemmas]* (Rest, 1986)

- ***Conclusion***
  - **Comments:** The initial survey, and each of the subsequent surveys concluded with an open-ended question asking participants whether they had any questions or comments about the research project.
  - Examining the open-ended responses to the this question, as well as the responses to other open-ended questions (e.g., job description) helped us detect bad data (e.g., random strings of letters)

# Final Survey

- The final survey was administered in week 13 of the project, after the 12th weekly survey was completed.

- The final survey was identical to the initial survey except it did not contain the DIT1 (i.e., section 5).
- Also, some of the job description items were omitted.

# Weekly Surveys

- Several days after the initial survey, participants began completing weekly online surveys (all 12 were identical)
- Research firm emailed participants the link to the weekly survey on Friday evening and they were instructed to complete it by Monday night at 11:59pm.
- Participants were given the following instructions:
  - *"You will be asked questions about your emotions and experiences during the past week.  By past week, we mean the previous 7 days."*
  - They were then reminded that all information collected in the survey would be kept completely confidential and secure, and only the research team has access to the data.

- The weekly surveys contained two sections.
  - Emotions experienced during past week
  - Behaviors and experiences at work during the past week

# Weekly Surveys - Emotions

- The weekly surveys began by asking participants about the emotions they experienced during the past week:
  - **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule** (PANAS; Watson & Tellegen, 1988)
    - 12 other emotion words also included
  - **Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale – short form** (CESD-15; Edwards et al., 2010).

- The PANAS and the CES-D were presented in a randomized order for each participant and the order of the items within each scale were randomized for each participant.

## Weekly Surveys – Work Section

- Began by asking participants if their employment situation changed during the past week.
  - If yes, they were asked to describe the changes. Participants who were no longer employed full-time were not eligible to participate in the study any longer.

- Participants were presented with a variety of scales that asked about their experiences at their job during the past week.
  - The order in which the scales were presented and the order of the items within each scale were randomized for each participant.

## Weekly Surveys – Work Section

- **Job satisfaction** (Cammann et al., 1983)
- **Number of hours worked during the past week**
- **Number of hours of sleep on average work and non-work nights during the past week**
- **Intention to turnover:** whether they had actively looked for a new job during the past week (yes or no)
- **Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist-32 items** (CWB-C-32; Spector et al., 2006)
- **Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist-20 items** (OCB-C-20; Fox et al., 2011)
- **Work Intensity Scale** (Brown & Lee, 1996)
- **State Work Engagement** (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Hetland, 2012)
- **Interactional Justice subscale from Organizational Justice Scale** (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998)
- **Discussion Conflict Scale** (Behfar, Bendersky, Weingart, Bear, Todorova, & Jehn, 2012, in preparation)
- **Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale** (ICAWS; Spector & Jex, 1998)
- **Workplace Ostracism Scale** (WOS; Ferris, Brown, Berry, & Lian, 2008)
- **Abusive Supervision** (Tepper, 2000)
- **Revised Everyday Discrimination Scale** (R-EDS; Stucky et al., 2011)

# Work Behaviors (CWB & OCB)

**Please indicate <u>how often you did each of the following things at your job during the past week.</u>**

| not at all this week | one time this week | two times this week | three times this week | four or more times this week | not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |

Participants presented with a randomized list of 32 CWB items and 20 OCB items.

# CWB

- Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) is volitional behavior that harms or intends to harm organizations or people in organizations (Fox & Spector, 2005)
  - *Abuse* (e.g., starting or continuing a damaging or harmful rumor at work; being nasty or rude to a client or customer)

  - *Production Deviance* (e.g., purposely doing your work incorrectly; purposely working slowly when things need to get done)

  - *Sabotage* (e.g., purposely wasting your employer's materials/supplies; purposely damaging a piece of equipment or property)

  - *Theft* (e.g., stealing something belonging to your employer; putting in to be paid for more hours than you work)

  - *Withdrawal* (e.g., coming to work late without permission; staying home from work and saying you were sick when you weren't)

# CWB-32

1. Purposely wasted your employer's materials/supplies
2. Purposely did your work incorrectly
3. Came to work late without permission
4. Stayed home from work and said you were sick when you weren't
5. Purposely damaged a piece of equipment or property
6. Purposely dirtied or littered your place of work
7. Stolen something belonging to your employer
8. Started or continued a damaging or harmful rumor at work
9. Been nasty or rude to a client or customer
10. Purposely worked slowly when things needed to get done
11. Taken a longer break than you were allowed to take
12. Purposely failed to follow instructions
13. Left work earlier than you were allowed to
14. Insulted someone about their job performance
15. Made fun of someone's personal life
16. Took supplies or tools home without permission
17. Put in to be paid for more hours than you worked
18. Took money from your employer without permission
19. Ignored someone at work
20. Blamed someone at work for error you made
21. Started an argument with someone at work
22. Stole something belonging to someone at work
23. Verbally abused someone at work
24. Made an obscene gesture (the finger) to someone at work
25. Threatened someone at work with violence
26. Threatened someone at work, but not physically
27. Said something obscene to someone at work to make them feel bad
28. Did something to make someone at work look bad
29. Played a mean prank to embarrass someone at work
30. Looked at someone at work's private mail/property without permission
31. Hit or pushed someone at work
32. Insulted or made fun of someone at work

# OCB-20

1. Picked up meal for others at work
2. Took time to advise, coach, or mentor a co-worker.
3. Helped co-worker learn new skills or shared job knowledge.
4. Helped new employees get oriented to the job.
5. Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a work problem.
6. Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a personal problem.
7. Changed vacation schedule, work days, or shifts to accommodate co-worker's needs.
8. Offered suggestions to improve how work is done.
9. Offered suggestions for improving the work environment.
10. Finished something for co-worker who had to leave early.
11. Helped a less capable co-worker lift a heavy box or other object.
12. Helped a co-worker who had too much to do.
13. Volunteered for extra work assignments.
14. Took phone messages for absent or busy co-worker.
15. Said good things about your employer in front of others.
16. Gave up meal and other breaks to complete work.
17. Volunteered to help a co-worker deal with a difficult customer, vendor, or co-worker.
18. Went out of the way to give co-worker encouragement or express appreciation.
19. Decorated, straightened up, or otherwise beautified common work space.
20. Defended a co-worker who was being "put-down" or spoken ill of by other co-workers or supervisor.

# Morality/Immorality of OCB & CWB

- We surveyed 443 employed U.S. adults (recruited from Amazon Mturk) about whether the 32 CWBs and 20 OCBs were immoral or moral.
  - -3 = *extremely immoral*, 2 = *immoral,* 1 = slightly immoral, 0 = *neutral*, +1 = *slightly moral, +2 = moral, +3 = extremely moral*
  - The items were presented in a randomized order for each participant.

- **Every CWB item was judged to be immoral (significantly below the neutral midpoint, all *p*s < .001)**
- **Every OCB item was judged to be moral (significantly above the neutral midpoint, all *p*s < .001).**

  - Given these results, we feel confident that the CWB-C can be used to assess unethical work behaviors and the OCB-C can be used to assess ethical work behaviors.

# Coworker Survey

- One month after completing the initial survey, participants were asked to provide an email address of a current coworker.

- Coworkers were emailed an invitation to complete a survey:
  - *"The survey asks about the personality and behavior of the coworker who recommended you for the study. It also asks about your job, personality, and behavior. Your responses will not be shared with your coworker and their responses will not be shared with you. All information collected is kept completely confidential and secure, and only the research team will have access to the data".*

# Coworker Survey

- Demographic questionnaire
- Questions about the coworker who invited them to participate in the study.
  - How long and how well did they knew the person they were rating,
  - Nature of their work relationship (e.g., colleague, supervisor, etc.).
- **Observer-reports (in a randomized order) of:**
  - **Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale** (GASP; Cohen, Wolf, Panter, Insko, 2011)
  - **HEXACO Personality Inventory-60 Items** (HEXACO-PI-R-60; Ashton & Lee, 2009)
  - **Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist-32 items** (CWB-C-32; Spector et al., 2006) [Assessed CWB behaviors committed during the past month]
  - **Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist-20 items** (OCB-C-20; Fox et al., 2011) [Assessed OCB behaviors committed during the past month]
- **Self-reports of the same scales**

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# The Observability and Stability of Character

Preliminary Findings

# Guilt Proneness and Honesty-Humility

○ We collected self-reports and observer-reports of **guilt proneness** (assessed with the GASP scale) and **Honesty-Humility** (assessed with the HEXACO-60)

   ○ Both are "character traits" in that unethical behaviors are committed disproportionately by people with low rather than high levels of these traits.

○ We are interested in investigating the observability and stability guilt proneness and Honesty-Humility, and comparing them to the "Big 5" personality dimensions of Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience.

Cohen, Panter, Turan, & Morse, *in preparation*

# Guilt Proneness

○ Guilt proneness is an individual difference reflecting a predisposition to experience negative feelings about personal wrongdoing, even when the wrongdoing is private.

○ It is an *emotional trait*--the anticipation of feeling guilty about committing transgressions--rather than a specific emotional state characterized by guilty feelings in a particular moment or generalized guilty feelings that occur without an eliciting event.

Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011*, Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*

# Guilt Proneness & Unethical Behavior

o Guilt proneness predicts the likelihood that people will engage in unethical behavior.

   o Individuals high in guilt proneness commit less CWB, lie less, and make fewer unethical business decisions.

o Why should guilt proneness decrease unethical behavior?

   o The anticipation of guilty feelings about private misdeeds indicates that one has internalized moral values.

      o Thus, for guilt-prone individuals public surveillance is not required to prevent moral transgressions (instead, their conscience guides them).

# GASP

o *Instructions*: In this questionnaire you will read about situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by common reactions to those situations. As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate the likelihood that you would react in the way described.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Unlikely | Unlikely | Slightly Unlikely | About 50% Likely | Slightly Likely | Likely | Very Likely |

Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011*, Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*

# Guilt Proneness Items

1. After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn't notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?

2. You secretly commit a felony. What is the likelihood that you would feel remorse about breaking the law?

3. At a coworker's housewarming party, you spill red wine on their new cream-colored carpet. You cover the stain with a chair so that nobody notices your mess. What is the likelihood that you would feel that the way you acted was pathetic?

4. You lie to people but they never find out about it. What is the likelihood that you would feel terrible about the lies you told?



The frequency of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) over the course of seven days committed by 416 U.S. employees low, medium, and high in guilt proneness (recruited from Amazon MTurk).

Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2012, *Journal of Business Ethics*

Guilt proneness predicted CWB controlling for other known correlates of CWB.

| Regression of CWB Scores | β | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | | 5.53 | <.001* |
| Guilt Proneness | -.21 | -5.13 | <.001* |
| Gender (0 = male, 1 = female) | -.10 | -2.48 | .01* |
| Age (in years) | -.09 | -1.84 | .07+ |
| Hours worked during past week | -.02 | -.38 | .71 |
| Tenure at job (in months) | .03 | .65 | .52 |
| Job Satisfaction | .09 | 1.59 | .11 |
| Intention to Turnover | .12 | 2.58 | .01* |
| Interpersonal Conflict | .39 | 9.05 | <.001* |
| Negative Affect at Work | .22 | 4.69 | <.001* |
| Positive Affect at Work | .00 | -.04 | .97 |

Cohen, Panter, & Turan, 2012, *Journal of Business Ethics*

# Guilt Proneness and Moral Disposition

- Guilt proneness correlates with other moral personality measures.
- Bivariate correlations with guilt proneness self-reports from the initial survey ($N$ = 1,515)
  - **Honesty-Humility**: $r$ = .50*
  - **Empathic Concern**: $r$ = .46*
  - **Perspective Taking**: $r$ = .37*
  - **Moral Identity–Internalization**: $r$ = .41*
  - **Moral Idealism / Relativism** (EPQ): $r$ = .35* / -.24*
  - **Consideration of Future Consequences**: $r$ = .35*
  - **Cognitive moral development** (DIT N2 score): $r$ = .17*
  - **Exploitiveness-Entitlement** (Narcissism): $r$ = -.35*
  - **Machiavellianism** ($N$ = 495): $r$ =-.50*
  - **Self-control** ($N$ = 495): $r$ = .30*

*$p$ < .05

## Religion & Guilt Proneness

|  | Guilt Proneness r |
| --- | --- |
| Intrinsic Religiosity | .36* |
| Extrinsic Religiosity | .05 |

*Note.* Bivariate correlations are presented. *p < .05
(N = 450 UNC undergraduate students)

|  | M | SD |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Christian/Protestant  (N = 282) | 5.59 | 1.19 |
| Catholic (N = 124) | 5.47 | 1.03 |
| Jewish (N = 37) | 5.36 | 0.85 |
| Agnostic (N = 86) | 5.12 | 1.13 |
| Atheist (N = 74) | 4.98 | 1.15 |
| Other / multiple categories (N = 126) | 5.25 | 1.32 |

*Note.* Means are presented.
Study 2 (U.S. adults recruited from an online subject pool)

Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011*, Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*

## Honesty-Humility

- o Honesty-Humility (H) is measured with the HEXACO, which includes assessments of the Big 5: (E) Emotionality, (X) Extraversion, (A) Agreeableness, (C) Conscientiousness, and (O) Openness to Experience.
  - o These are broad personality dimensions rather than narrow traits.
  - o The four facets underlying Honesty-Humility are Fairness, Sincerity, Modesty, and Greed-Avoidance.
  - o "Honesty-Humility represents the tendency to be fair and genuine in dealing with others, in the sense of cooperating with others even when one might exploit them without suffering retaliation." (Ashton & Lee, 2007, p 156).

- o Individuals high in Honesty-Humility commit less CWB, lie less, and make fewer unethical business decisions.
  - o Correlated with guilt proneness ($r$ = .50)

Ashton & Lee, 2007, 2008, 2009; www.HEXACO.org

# HEXACO

o  *Instructions*: In this questionnaire you will read a series of statements that may or may not apply to you. Please read each statement and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral (neither agree nor disagree) | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Ashton & Lee, 2009, *Journal of Personality Assessment*

# Honesty-Humility Items

o  I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.
o  If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
o  Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
o  I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.
o  If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.
o  I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
o  I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
o  I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.
o  I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.
o  I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.
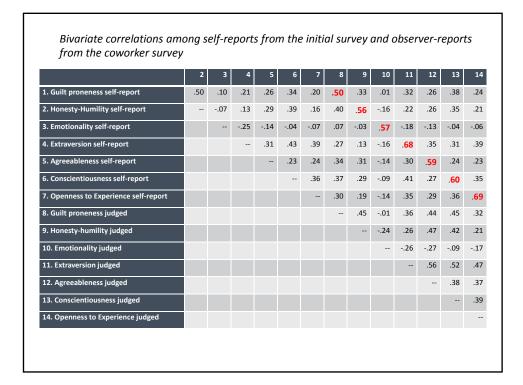
## Honesty Humility and Moral Disposition

- Honesty-Humility correlates with other moral personality measures
- Bivariate correlations with Honesty-Humility self-reports from the initial survey (*N* = 1,515)
  - **Guilt proneness**: *r* = .50*
  - **Empathic Concern**: *r* = .36*
  - **Perspective Taking**: *r* = .30*
  - **Moral Identity–Internalization**: *r* = .33*
  - **Moral Idealism / Relativism** (EPQ): *r* = .23* / -.34*
  - **Consideration of Future Consequences**: *r* = .34*
  - **Cognitive moral development (DIT N2 score):** *r* = .11*
  - **Exploitiveness-Entitlement (Narcissism):** *r* = -.45*
  - **Machiavellianism** (*N* = 495): *r* =-.49*
  - **Self-control** (*N* = 495): *r* = .45*

*p < .05

## Results

| | Self-Observer correlations (N = 341) | Test-Retest correlations (N = 845) |
|---|---|---|
| **Guilt proneness** | **.50** | **.67** |
| **Honesty-Humility** | **.56** | **.66** |
| **Emotionality** | .57 | .75 |
| **Extraversion** | .68 | .78 |
| **Agreeableness** | .59 | .74 |
| **Conscientiousness** | .60 | .71 |
| **Openness to Experience** | .69 | .83 |

*Note.* The test-retest correlations are based on the self-report data provided in the initial and final surveys. The self-observer correlations are based on the self-report data provided in the initial survey and the observer-report data provided in the coworker survey. All correlations were significant at *p* < .001.

*Bivariate correlations among self-reports from the initial survey and observer-reports from the coworker survey*

| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Guilt proneness self-report | .50 | .10 | .21 | .26 | .34 | .20 | **.50** | .33 | .01 | .32 | .26 | .38 | .24 |
| 2. Honesty-Humility self-report | -- | -.07 | .13 | .29 | .39 | .16 | .40 | **.56** | -.16 | .22 | .26 | .35 | .21 |
| 3. Emotionality self-report | | -- | -.25 | -.14 | -.04 | -.07 | .07 | -.03 | **.57** | -.18 | -.13 | -.04 | -.06 |
| 4. Extraversion self-report | | | -- | .31 | .43 | .39 | .27 | .13 | -.16 | **.68** | .35 | .31 | .39 |
| 5. Agreeableness self-report | | | | -- | .23 | .24 | .34 | .31 | -.14 | .30 | **.59** | .24 | .23 |
| 6. Conscientiousness self-report | | | | | -- | .36 | .37 | .29 | -.09 | .41 | .27 | **.60** | .35 |
| 7. Openness to Experience self-report | | | | | | -- | .30 | .19 | -.14 | .35 | .29 | .36 | **.69** |
| 8. Guilt proneness judged | | | | | | | -- | .45 | -.01 | .36 | .44 | .45 | .32 |
| 9. Honesty-humility judged | | | | | | | | -- | -.24 | .26 | .47 | .42 | .21 |
| 10. Emotionality judged | | | | | | | | | -- | -.26 | -.27 | -.09 | -.17 |
| 11. Extraversion judged | | | | | | | | | | -- | .56 | .52 | .47 |
| 12. Agreeableness judged | | | | | | | | | | | -- | .38 | .37 |
| 13. Conscientiousness judged | | | | | | | | | | | | -- | .39 |
| 14. Openness to Experience judged | | | | | | | | | | | | | -- |

# Results

- **Observability**
  - Guilt proneness and Honesty-Humility are just as observable as Agreeableness and Emotionality, but less observable than Extraversion and Openness to Experience.
  - Consciousness was found to be more observable than guilt proneness, but not Honesty-Humility.

- **Stability**
  - Guilt proneness and the six HEXACO dimensions were all found to be quite stable between the initial and final surveys.
    - The test-retest correlations for guilt proneness and Honesty-Humility were somewhat smaller in magnitude that the other HEXACO dimension.
    - May suggest that character is less stable than personality, but this requires further research.

## Conclusions

- The workplace is an important setting to study how character affects moral and immoral behavior because most adults spend a substantial portion of their lives at work.

- By examining the factor structure of and longitudinal relations among character, personality, emotions, experiences, and behavior, we hope to learn more about the ways in which these factors influence ethical and unethical behavior at the workplace.

# Thank you!

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