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ABSTRACT

High scorers on the Self-Monitoring Scale (S-M) typically monitor and control the self-images they project when engaged in social interactions. They are believed to be confident, sociable, and competent in social interactions. The original S-M scale was administered to 101 undergraduate students who also took the revised Self-Monitoring Scales (R/SM), the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), the Social Avoidance and Distress (SAD) scale and the Psychosocial Support Inventory (PSI). The results were consistent with the view that high scorers on the S-M were confident, sociable, and competent in social interactions. Results from the Other Directed subscale derived from the S-M, however, were not consistent with that view. Overall, the results suggest that the R/SM is an improvement over the original S-M scale. Although the results, in general, were consistent with self-monitoring predictions, many criticisms of the S-M scale voiced by Briggs and Cheek (1986) appear to be valid. In addition, the results for the CPI Self-Control scale were not consistent with Snyder's (1987) report that low self-monitors are better suited than high self-monitors to a single, close, and intimate relationship. (Author/NB)

THE REVISED SELF-MONITORING SCALE AND SOCIAL SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

High scorers on the Self-Monitoring Scale (S-M) are believed to be confident, sociable, and competent in social interactions. Results for 101 undergraduates given the original S-M and the revised Self-Monitoring (R/SM) Scales, the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), the Social Avoidance and Distress (SAD), and a test assessing social support (PSI) networks were generally consistent with this view. Results for an "Other Directed" subscale (Briggs & Cheek, 1986) derived from the S-M, however, were not. Nor were the results for the CPI Self-Control scale consistent with Snyder's (1987) perspective. The R/SM proved to be a better measure than the original S-M. Even so, many of Briggs and Cheek's (1986) criticisms appear to still be valid.

INTRODUCTION

Having been used in over 100 studies, the Self-Monitoring (S-M) scale (Snyder, 1974) has been quite popular. People who score at the high extreme typically monitor and control the self-images they project when engaged in social interaction. Individuals low in self-monitoring, on the other hand, usually behave in a consistent way, expressing their true feelings and thoughts regardless of the social environment. Recently, Snyder (1987) expanded this concept and asserted that the tendency to monitor one's own behavior affects not only the individual's behavior in social situations, but the person's view of the world and the dynamics of personal relationships as well.

Despite its popularity, the S-M has also been a target of criticism. Briggs, Cheek, and Buss (1980), for example, claim that the test in actuality measures several variables rather than a single construct. Briggs et al., identified three rotated factors they named "Acting, Extraversion, and Other-Directedness." In particular, they found that the Other-Directedness factor, representing nearly half of the S-M scale (11 of 25 items), correlated positively with measures of Shyness, Public Self-Consciousness, and Neuroticism and negatively with Self-Esteem -- results obviously at variance with the description of high self-monitorers presented by Snyder.

Gangestad and Snyder (1985) acknowledge that there may be as many as four rotated factors found with the S-M. Their own research (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), in fact, revealed three which they called expressive self-control, social stage presence, and other directed self-presentation. They argue, however, that the focus should be on the unrotated factor structure. They found in factor analyzing the S-M responses of 1,918 college students that all but one of the 25 items on the scale loaded positively on the first unrotated factor that emerged, indicating a strong correlation with the total scale.

In an 18-item revised version of the Self-Monitoring Scale (R/SM), Gangestad and Snyder (1985) eliminated seven items from the original scale that did not discriminate well. They also proposed that the S-M represented an example of a discretely distributed class variable, with discretely distributed differences, in kind, rather than a dimensional variable with continuously distributed differences in degree.

Whether S-M measures a discrete class variable, a dimensional variable, or several independent factors, those who score high on the S-M should be confident, sociable, and competent in social interactions. To test this belief, subject's scores on the S-M, R/SM, and the three factors isolated by Briggs, Cheek, and Buss (1980) on the S-M were compared to their test scores on the California Psychological Inventory (CPI; Gough, 1956), Social Avoidance and Distress (SAD; Watson & Friend, 1969), and the Psychosocial Support Inventory (PSI; Plas &Wallston, 1983). It was expected that self-monitoring measures would correlate negatively with SAD and positively with PSI (social networks) and with CPI scales which measure qualities such as sociability, social presence, etc.,.

METHOD

A total of 68 and 33 female undergraduate General Psychology student volunteers completed a set of questionnaires that consisted of the S-M, CPI, SAD, and PSI tests.

RESULTS

Correlations between the variables studied are shown in Table 1. Consistent with Snyder and Gangestad (1986), the R/SM correlations were generally stronger and more significant than the S-M correlations and there were more of them (9 vs. 7). In contrast to S-M where a significant relation was not found, correlation of the R/SM with SAD was negative and significant. All PSI (social support) correlations with S-M (3 in all) and R/SM (2 in all) were positive. And positive correlations occurred with several CPI scales: Dominance, Capacity for Status, Sociability, Social

Presence, and Self-Acceptance. Somewhat surprisingly, however, a negative correlation occurred with the CPI Self-control scale and the self-monitoring measures. It would seem that a person highly adept at controlling the image he or she presents during social interaction should not be lacking in self-control. Perhaps high self monitors exhibit greater spontaneity and flexibility, and are more likely than low self-monitors to follow the impulse of the moment? Finally, the finding of higher scores by males on the R/SM scale was consistent with past findings (Snyder, 1987) on self-monitoring.

Consistent with Briggs et al., (1980) the results also suggest that both the S-M and R/SM may be tapping three distinct dimensions. The greatest number (16 vs. 9 for R/SM) of correlations and the most highly significant correlations occurred with the factor that Briggs et al. identified as "Extraversion." "Acting" correlated with 9 other variables and "Other directed" with 6. Moreover, the results found with regard to the Other-directedness factor and some of the CPI scales (e.g., Social Presence, Well-being, and Psychological-Mindedness) is in a direction opposite to that predicted by self monitoring theory and replicates a trend described by Briggs et al. (1980). While Other-Directedness correlated with 6 CPI and PSI categories, only the PSI Work Activity measure was in a direction clearly consistent with self-monitoring theory. Finally, and also inconsistent with past theorizing, Snyder (1987) reports low self-monitors as better suited to a single, close, and intimate relationship, than high self monitors, who tend to engage in several relationships on a less committed level. S-M and R/SM measures in the present study, in contrast, were positively correlated with general intimacy in social networks, and with boy/girl friend intimacy. This finding might be due, in part, however, to the high self monitor's greater repertoire of behavior skills that are likely to elicit intimate behavior. The low self-monitor, in contrast, would be likely to be more selective and would reject many relationships because of a dissimilarity of attitudes. Thus, consistent with results found by Snyder, Simpson, and Gangestad (1986) concerning the number of different sexual partners high and low monitors have, these particular scales might reflect quantity of intimate relations vs. quality of intimacy in a relationship.

Overall, the results argued for both Snyder and Gangestad (1986) and Briggs and Cheek (1986). First, the R/SM appears to be an improvement over the original scale. Secondly, in general, the results were consistent with self-monitoring predictions. Never-the-less, and still troublesome, Briggs and Cheek's (1986) contention seems to still be true. The three separate factors that Briggs et al., (1980) isolated earlier correlate at

least as strongly with the CPI, the SAD and the Psychosocial Support Index as the complete R/SM scale does, they do so more frequently, and they account for a greater portion of the variance. Particularly troublesome, unless one engages in a great deal of post hoc reasoning, is the significant negative correlations between "Other-Directedness" and three of the CPI scales; and between the S-M and R/SM and the CPI Self-Control scale.

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Table 1
Self-Monitoring and Social Skills Correlations

Social Skills Measures	Self-Monitoring Measures S-M	R/SM	Actg.	Extrav.	Othdir.
SAD		-.25*		-.56***	
CPI:					
Dominance	.31**	.40**	.26**	45***	
Capacity for Status		.30**	.29**	.34***	
Sociability	.26**	.34***	.26**	.54***	
Social Presence		.26**	.30**	.46***	-.20*
Self-Acceptance	.30**	.39***	.34***	.44***	
Well-Being					-.21*
Socialization			-.21*		
Self-Control	-.34***	-.27**	-.26**	-.20*	
Psychol.-Mindedness					-.23*
Femininity					.29**
Psychol. Sup. Inv:					
General Intimate	.21*	.20*		.29**	
Recent Intimate				.29**	
General Activity				.27**	
Recent Activity				.31**	
Boy/Girlfr. Material			.22*	.24*	
Family Material					.22*
Boy/Girlfriend Intim.	.23*	.23*		.29**	
Boy/Girlfr. Activity				.21*	
Classmate Activity				.22*	
Work Activity	.20*				.24*
Friend Guidance			.20*		
Male vs. Fem. Subj.		.24*			

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