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I-O PSYCHOLOGY

ASSESSMENT CENTERS ARE DEFICIENT PREDICTORS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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OVERVIEW

ONE | The Criterion-related Validity of ACs

TWO | Expanding the Criterion Domain

THREE | ACs and Relational Behaviors: Five Studies

FOUR | Some Troubling Empirical Findings

FIVE | Potential Solutions

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ASSESSMENT CENTERS FOR LEADER ASSESSMENT

- The premiere approach to leader assessment
  - Predictive validity (Arthur et al.; Gaugler et al.; Meriac et al.)
    - Manager pay / advancement
    - Training performance
    - Task performance
- Criterion domain of ACs never been expanded beyond task-oriented criterion variables
  - Have we underestimated the validity of ACs?
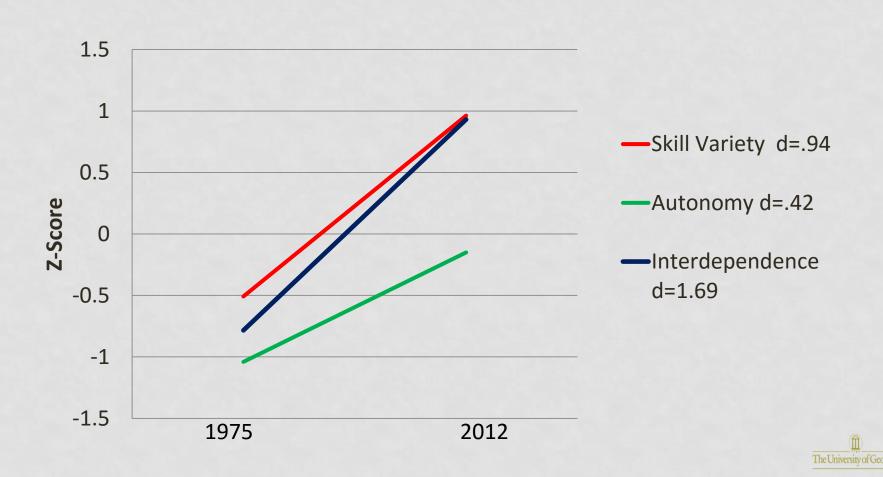
EXPANDING THE CRITERION DOMAIN

- Increased focus on pro-relational and pro-organizational behaviors
  - Evident in leadership and job performance literatures

- Differ by source of rating more than content

- Relationship maintenance behaviors (RMBs)
  - Necessary in modern world of work

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CHANGES IN JOB CHARACTERISTICS IN THE U.S.A. SINCE 1975 (WOOD & HOFFMAN, 2016)

MODERN WORKERS EXPERIENCE:
(WEGMAN & HOFFMAN, 2016)

◉ Decreased: job satisfaction, especially satisfaction with coworkers and supervision

◉ Increased: role conflict, emotional exhaustion, and work-life conflict

LEADERSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD OF WORK

◉ Manage autonomous, interdependent, highly skilled but overworked and emotionally exhausted workers

- Directive, structuring leadership might actually harm employee motivation in this context (Grant et al., 2011)

- Instead, more relational leadership is needed in the modern world of work (Gentry et al., 2011)

- Consideration-based leader behaviors and leader effectiveness (DeRue et al., 2011)

- Lateral influence and relationship building and maintenance

◉ RMBs are critical to effective leadership

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OVERARCHING PREDICTION

- Among the most interpersonal predictors

- Designed to simulate leadership role

- Include dimensions explicitly labeled as RMBs

ACs will be associated with various conceptualizations of RMBs.

DIRECT ANALYSIS

▣ Five samples from around the world

▣ General approach

1. Focus on OAR

2. Establish relationship between OAR and task performance

   ■ Show AC works as normal

3. Examine correlation between OAR and RMBs

3. Task performance and relational behaviors tend to be strongly correlated

   ■ Control for task performance

I APOLOGIZE. SINCERELY.

SAMPLE 1

- Do ACs predict organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB)?

- AC for developmental feedback for working professional students Switzerland (N = 107)
  - 7 dimensions: analytic skills, organizing, persuasiveness, assertiveness, presentation skills, creativity, and cooperation

- Supervisor ratings
  - OCBs: conscientiousness, sportsmanship, altruism (Podsakoff et al.)
  - Task performance (Williams & Anderson)

Sample 1: OAR and OCB

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Task Performance		
OAR	.23 (.14) *	.16 (.09) **
OCB	-	.74 (.08) **
R²	0.05	.60
Δ R²	-	.55**
F	6.11	78.19
DV: Organizational Citizenship Behaviors		
OAR	.09 (.12)	-.09 (.08)
Task Perf.	-	.79 (.05)
R²	0.01	0.58
Δ R²	-	.57**
F	0.94	72.14

SAMPLE 2: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- But OCB is not really a leadership behavior
- Sample 2: individualized consideration
- Assessment center for Swiss military (N = 96)
  - 8 dimensions: **social contact**, personal attitude, achievement motivation, drive, structuring and planning, oral communication, dealing with conflicts, and influencing others

- Trainer ratings of training performance

- Subordinate ratings of individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio)
  - Collected 2 years after the AC

SAMPLE 2: OAR PREDICTING INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Training Performance		
OAR	.18 (.31)*	.17 (.32)*
Ind Consideration	-	-.07 (.11)
R²	.03	.04
Δ R²	-	.01
F	2.69	1.52
DV: Individual Consideration		
OAR	-.23 (.33)*	-.21 (.34)*
Training Perf.	-	-.07 (.12)
R²	.05	.06
Δ R²	-	.01
F	4.13	2.24

SAMPLE 3: COOPERATION

- But the AC in Sample 2 didn't try to measure transformational leadership
  - Maybe better results if try to measure the exact same behaviors

- AC for developmental feedback for working students (N = 92) in Switzerland
  - 6 AC dimensions: <u>cooperation</u>, organizing and planning, persuasiveness, presentation skills, analytic skills, assertiveness

- Supervisor ratings on the exact same dimensions of the AC
  - Measured the EXACT same way in the AC and with supervisor ratings
  - Cooperation

SAMPLE 3: OAR PREDICTING COOPERATION (BOSS)

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Task Performance		
OAR	.21 (.17)*	.24 (.16) *
OCB	-	.34 (.17) **
R^2	0.04	0.16
ΔR^2	-	.12**
F	4.14	8.31
DV: Cooperation		
OAR	-0.10 (0.10)	-.17 (.10)
Task Performance	-	.35 (.06) **
R^2	0.01	0.13
ΔR^2	-	.12**
F	0.83	6.45

SAMPLE 4: RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS

- ◉ Samples 1-3 were a bit non-traditional; let's try some more traditional samples

- ◉ Assessment center from large U.S. consulting firm (N = 201)
  - ▪ 3 relational dimensions in **both** the AC and from supervisor ratings: fosters teamwork, builds relationships, and fosters open communication
  - ▪ Supervisor rating of overall performance

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SAMPLE 4: OAR AND RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Overall Performance		
OAR	.20(.17)*	.12 (.13)*
Relational at work	-	.64 (.06) **
R^2	.04	.45
ΔR^2	-	.41**
F	8.52**	81.22**
DV: Relational Behaviors at Work		
OAR	0.13 (.16)	.00 (.12)
Overall Performance	-	.66 (.05) **
R^2	.02	.43
ΔR^2	-	.41**
F	3.67	77.03**

SAMPLE 5:OCB-I, OCB-O, AND VOICE

- Sigh. One more try.

- Assessment center for development in South Africa(N = 88)
  - Supervisor ratings of task, OCB-I, OCB-O, and Voice
  - 5 total dimensions: analyzes issues, uses sound judgment, manages execution, influences others, and *fosters relationships*
  - Supervisor rating of task performance

SAMPLE 5: RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS (AC) AND VOICE

	Independent Variable		Dependent Variable			
			OCB-O	OCB-I	Voice	Task Performance
Step 1	Task Performance		.69**	.66**	.63**	
	OAR		-.05	.07	.08	
Step 2	OCB-O					.48**
	OCB-I					.26
	Voice					.27*
	OAR					.09
Step 3	Task Performance		.69**	.66**	.63**	
	AC-Relationship		-.01	.07	.16*	

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SUMMARY: ACS AND RMBS

- ▣ 5 Samples
  - ■ Four different countries
  - ■ Different ACs for different purposes
  - ■ Different dimensions and exercises
  - ■ Different operationalizations of RMBs
- ▣ Consistent result
  - ■ OAR was unrelated to RMB
  - ■ Sometimes weak and negative!
  - ■ Even relational dimensions rarely associated with RMBs (except sample 4)
  - ■ Preliminary evidence for association with voice behaviors

TROUBLING EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

⊡ The premier and most expensive measure to select leaders

- Do not predict relational behaviors

⊡ BUT, relational behaviors are increasingly important

- Manage highly skilled, autonomous, interdependent, and stressed workers (Gentry et al., 2011; Grant et al., 2011; Hoffman, 2016)
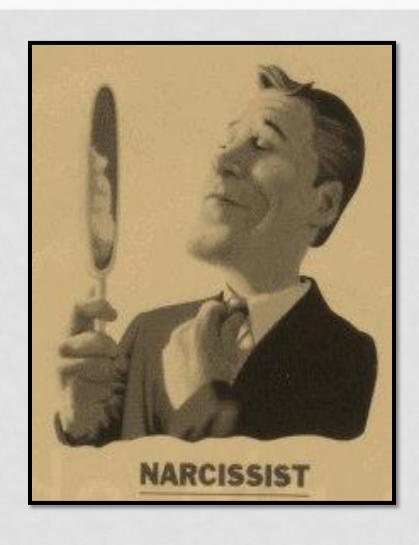
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CONVERGING EVIDENCE

◘ Dimensions and exercises associated with openness, extraversion (Hoffman, 2015; Meriac et al., 2014)

- No overlap with personality markers of "getting along"
- Even for "getting along" dimensions (Meriac et al., 2013)

◘ Narcissism predicts performance in LGDs, even by trained assessors (Brunell et al., 2008)

- Similar findings in interviews (Schnure et al., 2011)

◘ Not necessarily actively promoting narcissistic leaders, but certainly not screening them out either.

WHAT TYPE OF LEADER EXCELS IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS?

NARCISSIST

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POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS

◾ Short term / evaluative situation (maximum performance)

◾ ACs have not adapted to modern world of work
  ◾ Reason for declining criterion-related validity

◾ Nature of exercises- interpersonal but not interdependent (Hoffman et al., 2015)

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PREDICTING RMB WITH ACS: ALTER THE DIMENSIONS?

◉Participative vs. directive influence?

◉Increase pro-social / cooperative dimensions?

◉Weight pro-social / cooperative dimensions?

◉Skeptical that changing dimensions in isolation is the answer

- Limited success in the past

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PREDICTING RMBS WITH ACS: ALTER THE EXERCISES

- Consider exercise design
  - Work with a high-performing employee on a project
  - Interaction with peer *role players* across organizational units
  - Provide career, not task-based, mentoring
  - Counseling an employee on work-life demands
  - The reappearance of role players at a later meeting

- If we cannot?
  - Personality inventories?

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- We know that ACs predict performance of those in managerial/leadership roles

- What type of leaders are we promoting?

- Researchers and practitioners must attend to this question

- Redesign ACs to better predict relational behaviors

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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Sample 1: Cooperation and OCB

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Task Performance		
Cooperation (AC)	.12 (.14)	.06 (.09)
OCB	-	.75 (.08) **
R²	0.02	0.58
Δ R²	-	.56**
F	1.66	70.92
DV: Organizational Citizenship Behaviors		
Cooperation (AC)	.09 (.12)	-.004 (.08)
Task Performance	-	.76 (.05) **
R²	0.01	0.57
Δ R²	-	.56**
F	0.87	

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SAMPLE 2: AC SOCIAL CONTACT PREDICTING INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Training Performance		
Social Contact	.06 (.31)	.05 (.32)
Ind Consideration	-	-.10 (.11)
R^2	.00	.01
ΔR^2	-	.01
F	.29	.56
DV: Individualized Consideration		
Social Contact	-.10 (.34)	-.10 (.34)
Training Perf.	-	-.10 (.12)
R^2	.01	.02
ΔR^2	-	.01
F	.73	.78

SAMPLE 3: COOPERATION (AC) PREDICTING COOPERATION (BOSS)

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Task Performance		
Cooperation (AC)	.05 (.12)	.05 (.11)
Cooperation at work	-	.31 (.18) **
R^2	0.01	0.10
ΔR^2	-	.10**
F	0.24	5.03
DV: Cooperation at Work		
Cooperation (AC)	.01 (.07)	-.01 (.06)
Task Performance	-	.32 (.06) **
R^2	0.00	0.10
ΔR^2	-	.10**
F	0.01	4.90

SAMPLE 4: RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS (AC) AND RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS (BOSS)

Variable	Step 1	Step 2
DV: Overall Performance		
Relational (AC)	.07 (.14)	-0.06 (.22)
Relational at work	-	.67 (.06)**
R^2	.01	.44
ΔR^2	-	.43**
F	1.08	78.13
DV: Relational Behaviors at Work		
Relational (AC)	.20 (.13)**	.15 (.10) **
Overall Performance	-	.65 (.05) **
R^2	0.04	0.42
ΔR^2	-	.46**
F	8.27**	84.46

IMPLICATIONS

- Good-news bad news

- OAR

- Questionable value in developmental settings

- Consider redesign

- Practitioners must evaluate their AC

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