SELF-PEER AGREEMENT AS A FUNCTION OF TWO KINDS OF TRAIT RELEVANCE: PERSONAL AND SOCIAL

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We proposed a refinement of the construct of trait relevance that would allow for more accurate prediction of self-peer agreement. A distinction is offered between a given trait’s personal and social relevance. Personal relevance refers to whether a trait is central to a person’s self-identity whereas social relevance refers to the perceived social value of a given trait. People reporting that a trait is central to their identity are expected to behave according to their true standing on the trait. However, people reporting that a trait is important to whether others will like them are expected to behave in accordance with situational demands rather than in accordance with their inner dispositions. The results of a self-peer rating study showed that ratings of personal relevance were associated with higher levels of self-peer agreement whereas ratings of social relevance were associated with lower levels of self-peer agreement. This pattern of results was obtained despite a significant positive correlation between ratings of personal and social relevance. Results also showed that ratings of social relevance were independent of two other previously identified moderators, self-reported trait consistency and observability.

Bem and Allen (1974) identified the following paradox for personality researchers: Although our intuition tells us that people show a great deal of consistency in their behavior across situations, the research literature points toward the opposite conclusion. In a provocative review, Mischel (1968) concluded that except for intelligence and closely related cognitive functions, trait to behavior correlations and correlations reflecting cross-situational consistency did not exceed the magnitude of .30. Further, he asserted that this ceiling reflected the situational specificity
of behavior rather than methodological problems of the research in question.

Bem and Allen (1974) attempted to resolve this paradox by suggesting that the low cross-situational consistency coefficients reflected the nomothetic fallacy of assuming that all traits are equally relevant to all people. These authors recommended the adoption of G.W. Allport’s (1937) idiographic view that “individuals differ not only in which traits are related to one another in each person, but also in terms of which traits are even relevant” (Bem & Allen, 1974, p. 509). Empirically, they proposed a moderator variable approach in which the search for behavioral consistency was focused upon that subset of people for whom a given trait is relevant. This change in emphasis amounts to shifting the question from whether personality traits predict behavior to the question of for whom they predict behavior.

In order to test the usefulness of a more idiographic approach to the study of consistency in personality, Bem and Allen separated individuals who reported being consistent on a particular trait dimension from those who reported they were not consistent. In other words, self-reported consistency was conceptualized as a moderator variable with the expectation that the higher the scores on this variable, the higher the actual cross-situational consistency. Results consistent with this hypothesis were obtained for the personality trait of friendliness. Subsequent replication attempts yielded generally supportive results. A meta-analysis of the results of 11 studies which used self-peer agreement as an index of behavioral consistency established a significant moderator effect for consistency, combined $z = 2.95, p < .005, r = .08$ (Zuckerman, Miyake, Koestner, Baldwin, & Osborne, 1991).¹

A MORE DIRECT TEST OF THE RELEVANCE HYPOTHESIS

It has been suggested that a more appropriate test of the Bem and Allen (1974) idiographic model would have been to examine the

¹ The Pearson correlation can be calculated from the $F$ test as follows:

$$r = \sqrt{\frac{F_{1, \nu}}{F_{1, \nu} + df/e}}$$

(Rosenthal, 1984, p. 25). The actual magnitude of the effect can be indicated by $r^2$, which is an estimate of the variance accounted for. Alternatively, Rosenthal and Rubin (1982) introduced the Binomial Effect Size Display, which shows that $r$ is identical to the difference between two success rates (e.g., an increase in success rate from 45% to 55% is association with a Pearson $r$ of .10).
moderator effects of self-reported trait relevance rather than self-reported consistency (Zuckerman et al., 1988). After all, self-reported trait relevance is most directly related to Allport's view that traits may be relevant to some people but not others. Although trait relevance and consistency are conceptually related, they are not identical (Cheek, 1982). Self-reported consistency may vary as a function of personality traits, heterogeneity of situations in which the person enacts the specific trait, social desirability, and also importance or relevance of the trait (Zuckerman, Bernieri, Koestner, & Rosenthal, 1989). To the extent that relevance is only one of the determinants of self-reported consistency, the relation between these two variables will be weak. Indeed, the mean correlation between self-reported consistency and self-reported relevance across seven studies is only .17 (Zuckerman et al., 1991).

Self-peer agreement on trait ratings has typically been used as an index of cross-situational behavioral consistency. The rationale for such an operationalisation is that unless behavior is consistent, there will be little agreement among judges (who observe the target in different situations) (Zuckerman et al., 1989). Five studies have examined the moderating influence of self-reported trait relevance on self-peer agreement. A meta-analysis revealed that the combined moderator effect across five studies was significant, combined z = 3.40, p < .001, average r = .10 (Zuckerman et al., 1991). The mean level of self-peer agreement associated with relevant traits across all studies was r = .40 whereas for irrelevant traits it was .31.2

**Another Kind Of Trait Relevance**

In a theoretical paper, Bem (1972) proposed that the construct of social desirability or need for approval might serve as an effective moderator variable. He suggested that someone with a high need for approval would be very consistent across situations that possess the same evaluative pressures, but show marked inconsistency across situations (and response modes) which are differentially subject to monitoring. By contrast, a nondefensive person who is not very concerned about approval would be expected to show relatively greater consistency across diverse situations. In an empirical test of Bem's (1972) predictions, Amelang and Borkenau (1986) showed that subjects scoring high on a personality measure of need for approval displayed less agreement between questionnaire scores and trait ratings by significant others.

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2 All calculations yielding average correlations were based on Fisher's z transformations of the correlations.
Zuckerman et al. (1989) decided to test the social desirability moderator hypothesis in a "trait-specific" rather than "person-specific" manner (Koestner, Bernieri, & Zuckerman, 1989). Subjects in a self-peer rating study ranked ten trait dimensions in terms of their perceived social desirability. Results showed that trait dimensions which were ranked as relatively neutral in social desirability (neither very desirable or undesirable) were associated with higher levels of self-peer agreement. A replication attempt, however, was unsuccessful (Zuckerman et al., 1991).

We propose that it may be useful to consider a trait's standing on "need for approval" or "social desirability" as another kind of trait relevance. We propose that it is important to distinguish between the personal relevance of a trait dimension and its social relevance. Personal relevance refers to whether a trait is central to a person's self-identity. This is the type of relevance that has been examined in previous moderator studies. Social relevance, on the other hand, refers to the perceived social value of a given trait dimension. While personal relevance can be measured by asking "How central to your self-concept is a particular trait?", social relevance can be assessed by asking "How important is a given trait dimension to whether others will like you and want to be with you?". This distinction recognizes that behavior is significantly influenced by both self-motives and social motives. Although the personal and social relevance of a given trait may both be high ("I consider conscientiousness very important to my identity and also very important to whether others will like me."), they need not be interdependent ("I consider conscientiousness central to my identity but irrelevant to whether others will like me.").

It should be noted that in reviewing person-specific moderators of consistency, Cheek (1982) proposed a parallel distinction between personal and social self-concept orientation. Personality measures associated with a strong personal self-concept orientation (e.g., identity) were expected to promote behavioral consistency whereas those associated with a strong social self-concept orientation (e.g., the self-monitoring scale) were expected to undermine behavioral consistency. A similar distinction has also been made in the attitude-behavior literature. According to Fishbein and Azjen's (1975) model of intentions, the prediction of behavior requires knowledge of (a) the person's attitude toward performing the behavior and (b) the person's subjective view of the social norms regarding the behavior.

The distinction between personal and social relevance is important to the moderator hypothesis because the two kinds of relevance can be
expected to influence the predictability of behavior in opposite ways. People reporting that a trait is central to their identity are expected to behave in accordance with their true standing on that trait. However, people reporting that a trait is important to whether others will like them are expected to behave differently across situations depending on whether or not their need to be liked is aroused. This reasoning suggests that ratings of personal relevance tell only half the story. It is important to know not only whether a trait is central to one’s personality but also whether it is sensitive to social motives that might be aroused differentially across situations.

The present study employed the self-peer rating paradigm to examine the moderating role of trait ratings of personal and social relevance. Subjects rated themselves on trait dimensions and were also rated by two of their friends. Subjects then ranked each of the trait dimensions in terms of their personal and social relevance. Approximately half of the subjects also rated the extent to which their behavior on each trait was consistent and observable. Previous studies have established both consistency and observability as significant moderators of self-peer agreement (Zuckerman et al., 1991).

The trait dimensions were drawn from Costa and McCrae’s (1985) five-factor model of personality so that we could determine whether the moderator hypothesis was more likely to be confirmed on particular dimensions. For example, it might be suggested that social relevance will serve as a more effective moderator on social dimensions such as extraversion and agreeableness rather than on a more task-oriented dimension like conscientiousness.

We expected ratings of social relevance to be positively related to ratings of personal relevance but independent from ratings of consistency and observability. We predicted that ratings of personal relevance would be positively associated with self-peer agreement whereas ratings of social relevance would be negatively associated with self-peer agreement.

METHOD

SUBJECTS

One hundred and sixty-five undergraduates (67 males and 98 females) completed a short battery of questionnaires in a laboratory room. Seventy-six subjects were contacted from a voluntary sign-up sheet in the Psychology building in the Spring of 1989. Eighty-nine subjects were
recruited by means of an advertisement in the campus newspaper in the Spring of 1990. All subjects were paid $5 for participating in the study.

After completing the questionnaires, subjects were asked to provide the names and phone numbers of two or three close friends so that the experimenters (two females) could contact these friends and ask them to verbally rate the subject on the ten dimensions. Subjects were instructed to inform their friends that they would be contacted for this purpose.

**PROCEDURE**

_Self-rating and peer rating_

Subjects rated themselves on 10 9-point bipolar adjective scales that were derived from Costa and McCrae's (1985) five-factor NEO-PI Personality Inventory. The five factors have been identified by a large number of studies, from a variety of instruments, and in both self-ratings and peer ratings (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Because the five factors are relatively independent they provide more statistical power when results are aggregated across scales.

For the present rating task, each factor was represented by two trait scales and each scale was anchored by a pair of antonyms. The factors and their antonyms were as follows. Neuroticism: calm vs worrying and secure vs insecure; Extraversion: outgoing vs reserved and joyful vs serious; Openness: imaginative vs practical and independent vs conforming; Agreeableness: irritable vs good natured and stubborn vs flexible; and Conscientiousness: conscientious vs irresponsible and ambitious vs aimless. The 10 trait scales were arranged in a random order except that each half of the 10-item questionnaire represented all five factors.

Subjects were rated by two peers on the same 10 trait scales. At least one of the two peers was of the same sex as the subject. These ratings were obtained over the telephone, with the experimenter reading the content of the questionnaire. After making their ratings, each peer was asked "How long have you known your friend?" The mean length of acquaintance was 53 months.

_Moderator variables_

Upon completion of the self-rating task, subjects rank ordered the 10 traits in terms of each of the four moderators. (The eighty-nine subjects collected in the Spring 1990 phase completed only the two relevance scales). Instructions for the personal relevance, consistency and observability ratings were identical to those presented by Zuckerman et al. (1988, 1989, 1991). Essentially, subjects rank ordered the 10 traits
from most to least personally relevant, and their behavior on each of the
10 traits from least to most consistent and from least to most
observable.

Instructions for ranking the traits on social relevance were as follows:
"Please rank order each dimension in terms of which ones you feel
are most important to whether other people will like you and want to be
with you. Place 1 next to the trait dimension that you feel has the
greatest influence on whether others will like you. Place 2 next to the
trait that is in second place in terms of relevance to whether others will
like you, and so on. Place 10 next to the trait dimension that you feel
does not at all influence whether or not others will like you."

The four ranking tasks were administered in a random order that was
individually determined for each subject.

For all four moderators, subjects’ responses were coded in such a
manner that higher scores represented higher levels of personal rele-
ance, social relevance, consistency, and observability.

RESULTS

Results are divided into three sections. The first section describes the
formation of global factors from the self and peer ratings. The second
section describes the relation among the four moderators. The third
section examines the moderating effects of the two kinds of relevance on
self-peer agreement.

CORRELATIONS AMONG TRAIT RATINGS

Trait ratings made by the two peers were combined. We then
calculated the correlations among the 10 self-ratings and among the 10
combined peer ratings. It was expected that traits drawn from the same
dimension would be significantly correlated and could be combined to
represent the five factors of personality. This expectation was confirmed
for the factors of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Consci-
scientiousness. In each case, the two items representing the factor were
significantly positively correlated with one another on both self and
peer ratings and did not correlate as strongly with any other trait. The
average correlations (averaging across self and peer ratings) were as
follows: Neuroticism, \( r = .36 \); Extraversion, \( r = .45 \); Agreeableness, \( r =
.44 \); and Conscientiousness, \( r = .34 \). Composite scores for both self and
peer ratings were created for Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness
and Conscientiousness by combining the ratings of the two items
representing each factor. The dimensions representing Openness were
not significantly correlated (average $r = .09$) and therefore will not be included in the moderator analyses which follow.

**Relations Among Moderators**

For each trait, we calculated correlations among the four moderators. The resulting coefficients were averaged across traits, yielding the correlation matrix presented in Table 1. It can be seen that the correlations are relatively low, ranging from .04 to .27. Ratings of social relevance appear to be independent of ratings of observability and consistency. There was a significant positive correlation ($p < .01$) between the ratings of personal and social relevance, but it should be remembered that we are making opposite predictions for the two moderators: Personal relevance should enhance self-peer agreement whereas social relevance should diminish it.

**Table 1**

**Mean Correlations Among Moderators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social Relevance</th>
<th>Personal Relevance</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Relevance</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observability</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Testing for Moderator Effects**

The moderator effects of personal and social relevance were examined in a moderated regression analysis, which is identical to the method used by Paunonen and Jackson (1985). Specifically, Sex, Self-rating, Personal Relevance, and Social Relevance were entered as the first block in a hierarchical regression; Sex X Self-rating, Sex X Personal Relevance and Sex X Social Relevance were entered as a second block; Self-rating X Personal Relevance and Self-rating X Social Relevance were entered as the third block. Because no interaction effects approaching significance ($p$'s > .10) were found for sex these were excluded from the model.

The variance accounted for by the Self-rating X Personal Relevance and Self-rating X Social Relevance products (entered as the fifth or sixth predictor in the equation) represented the moderator effect. Significance of the effect can be estimated by the $F$ test of the increase in variance accounted for. Effect size can be estimated by the partial
correlation between the predictor (Self-rating X Moderator) and the dependent variable (peer rating). Positive correlations indicate that the effect (analogous to Self-peer X Moderator interaction in analysis of variance) is such that the higher the moderator, the higher the self-peer consistency.

To obtain an overall estimate of the effects of social and personal relevance, Rosenthal and Rubin's (1986) procedure for combining nonindependent effects was applied to the data. Essentially this procedure combines statistics such as $t$'s in a manner that depends on the degree of nonindependence among the variables that are considered.\(^1\) In the present analyses, we followed procedures outlined by Zuckerman et al. (1989): We calculated the absolute values of (a) correlations among the 4 trait variables for subjects' self-ratings (mean $r = .134$), and of (b) correlations among the 4 trait variables for the combined peer ratings (mean $r = .123$). We then calculated the absolute values of correlations among the 4 trait variables for the cross-products of self-ratings and peer ratings, obtaining a mean $r$ of .130. The grand mean of these three overall means (grand mean $r = .129$) was entered into the Rosenthal and Rubin equation as a measure of interdependence among the variables that were examined. It should be noted that the selection of relatively independent trait dimensions resulted, as expected, in low correlations among factors for both self- and peer ratings.

**Moderator Effects of Personal and Social Relevance**

Table 2 presents moderator effects of personal and social relevance for each of the four factors of personality. Of the 4 regression analyses, two produced positive moderator effects for personal relevance and one of these effects (extraversion) was significant. The combined overall effect size for personal relevance was nearly identical to that identified by Zuckerman et al. (1991) in their most recent meta-analysis of the moderator effects of personal relevance on self-peer agreement. In the present study, however, this effect did not reach significance, $t(159) =$

\(^1\) Nonindependent $F$ or $t$'s can be combined as follows (Rosenthal & Rubin, 1986, p. 403):

$$t_\text{c} = \frac{\Sigma \lambda f_i}{[r(\Sigma \lambda^2 + (1-r) \Sigma \lambda^2 + (1-r^2) \Sigma \lambda^2)^{1/2}]^{1/2}}$$

where $t_\text{c}$ is the combined $t$, $\lambda_\text{c}$ is the weight assigned to each of the $f_i$ that are to be combined ($\lambda = 1$ in the present study, as all trait dimensions are weighted equally), $r$ is the correlation between the treatment variables, and df is the degrees of freedom of the tests to be combined.
TABLE 2
MORATOR EFFECTS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE FOR 4 TRAIT DIMENSIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Personal Relevance</th>
<th>Social Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$F^a$</td>
<td>$r^b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>7.45**</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ $F$ test of the increase in variance accounted for as a result of the Self-Rating X Moderator interaction (5th or 6th predictor in the equation). $d$f=158.

$^b$ Effect size (Pearson $r$) associated with the $F$ test and direction of the effect. $+s$ indicate that the higher the moderator, the higher the predictability of peer ratings from self-ratings.

$^* p < .01$

1.16. $p = .25$. $r = .09$. This suggests that trait ratings of personal relevance were associated with only somewhat higher levels of self-peer agreement.

Table 2 also shows that three of the four regressions produced positive moderator effects for social relevance and two of these effects were significant (neuroticism and extraversion). The combined overall effect for social relevance was highly significant, $t(159) = 2.66$, $p < .01$, $r = .21$. Higher ratings of social relevance were reliably associated with lower levels of self-peer agreement.$^4$

To more clearly display the results, we performed an enlarged version of Bem and Allen's (1974) forced dichotomies procedure. Specifically, subjects were classified into nine groups according to their trait ratings on each factor. Median splits of the two relevance moderators for each of the nine groups were crossed, resulting in a $2 \times 2$ design for each level of self-ratings: High/Low Personal Trait Relevance X High/Low Social Trait Relevance. Collapsing the subgroups formed by this design across the nine self-rating levels yielded four groups for each trait. Pearson correlations between self- and peer ratings were calculated for each of

$^4$ Separate moderator regressions were conducted for the two dimensions intended to represent openness. Personal relevance produced the expected positive moderator effects on both imaginative-practical and independent-conforming, $r's = 1.04$ and 0.60, respectively. Social relevance produced the expected negative moderator effect for independent-conforming ($t = -.052$), but a positive moderator effect for imaginative-practical ($t = 0.46$).
the 16 groups (4 groups X 4 trait factors). These correlations are presented in Table 3; mean correlations across the 4 factors are presented in Table 4.

### TABLE 3

**Trait-by-Trait Self-Peer Correlations As A Function Of Personal And Social Relevance Of The Traits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>High Personal Rel.</th>
<th>Low Personal Rel.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Social</td>
<td>Low Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(55)</td>
<td>(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>(28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(47)</td>
<td>(40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Numbers in parentheses are n's for each cell.*

### TABLE 4

**Mean Self-Peer Correlations For High vs Low Personal And Social Relevance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Social Relevance</th>
<th>Low Social Relevance</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Personal Relevance</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Personal Relevance</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen in Table 4 that ratings of high personal relevance produced only slightly higher self-peer correlations (mean $r = .50$) than did ratings of low personal relevance (mean $r = .49$). On the other hand, ratings of high social relevance produced substantially lower self-peer correlations (mean $r = .41$) than did ratings of low personal relevance (mean $r = .57$).

It can also be seen in Table 4 that the combination of high personal relevance and low social relevance produced a substantially higher
correlation ($r = .64$) than did the three other combinations ($r = .43$). Furthermore, this difference seems greater than differences among the three other combinations, a pattern that would support a synergistic effect of the two kinds of relevance. Ratings of high personal relevance produce dramatically higher self-peer correlations when they are aligned with ratings of low social relevance (mean $r = .64$) than when they are aligned with ratings of high social relevance (mean $r = .32$).

**DISCUSSION**

The results showed that the distinction between personal and social relevance has important implications for issues related to cross-situational consistency. Bem and Allen’s (1974) idiographic hypothesis that traits that are personally relevant (i.e., central to one’s self-concept) will be associated with greater self-peer agreement received strong support only when a given trait was also rated as low in social relevance (i.e., “How important is this trait to whether others will like you and want to be with you?”). For those traits rated as high in personal relevance but low in social relevance, the mean self-peer correlation across four trait dimensions was .64. This correlation is double that found for subjects who ranked a trait as high in personal relevance and high in social relevance (average $r = .32$). The average self-peer correlation obtained for the high personal/low social relevance group also exceeds the highest level obtained for traits judged to be personally relevant in previous studies.

The fact that we obtained a positive correlation of .27 between ratings of personal and social relevance suggests that ratings of personal relevance made in our previous studies may have been somewhat contaminated by subjects’ notion of social relevance. That is, subjects who are asked to “rate the trait that is most relevant to you, that is most influential in terms of how you behave” may be partly basing this judgement on whether the trait is influential in terms of whether others will like them and want to be with them. Such a judgement process would undermine the moderating influence of personal relevance because traits that are high in social relevance are likely to be adjusted from situation to situation resulting in a lack of consistency between self-ratings and peer ratings.

The present study appears to have identified a new moderator variable — social relevance. This moderator seems to represent a trait-specific version of what Bem (1972) referred to as need for approval and Cheek (1982) referred to as one’s social self-concept. This new modera-
tor is perhaps especially interesting because although it is positively correlated with the traditional moderators — personal relevance, consistency and observability — its effects are in the opposite direction. This suggests that combining the moderator effects of social relevance with those of personal relevance, consistency and observability may yield tremendously high levels of self-peer agreement. Such a combination procedure was not possible in the present study due to the sample size. However, such a test would seem worth pursuing in light of the fact that the present study suggests that ratings of personal and social relevance combine synergistically to influence self-peer agreement and previous studies indicated that personal relevance combines synergistically with consistency and observability (Zuckerman et al., 1988, 1989, 1991).

It is interesting to note that the present study obtained the strongest moderator effects for social and personal relevance on the factors of neuroticism and extraversion and the weakest on conscientiousness. Our previous studies have similarly found the strongest moderator effects for personal relevance on traits related to neuroticism and extraversion and negligible effects for traits drawn from the conscientiousness domain. This perhaps suggests that trait-specific moderators related to relevance are most effective when predicting behavior related to more interpersonal aspects of personality.

Available support for moderator effects of trait relevance covers only a narrow range of phenomena — self-peer correlations and little else. If this moderator defines the central or core issues for the person, they should have implications for all aspects of personality — behavioral, cognitive and affective. Accordingly, researchers must begin to broaden their focus beyond self-peer agreement and cross-situational consistency. The extension of a moderator variable approach to the interpersonal relations literature would seem to offer great promise. Researchers interested in predicting relationship quality might consider not only a couple’s relative standing on a variety of personality dimensions, but also whether the couple displays similar notions of what traits are personally and socially relevant.

REFERENCES


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