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Robert Taylor Anderson

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THE EFFECTS OF RACE, GENDER, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND
SOCIAL SKILLS ON SOCIAL DESIRABILITY RESPONSE

By

Robert Taylor Anderson

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF RACE, GENDER, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

AND SOCIAL SKILLS ON SOCIAL DESIRABILITY RESPONSE

By

Robert T. Anderson

Social desirability response (SDR), the tendency to endorse items indicative of behavior that is accepted but rarely performed and behavior that is not approved of but often committed, is often seen as a response bias which potentially distorts other answers given on any particular measure. In personnel selection, persons' scores may be discarded or altered to reflect this response bias because applicants who give responses believed to be untrue of most people are suspected to have given false responses on other items as well. Analyses show that these scores may be unnecessarily altered due to the possible influences of community involvement and social skills on individuals' responses to social desirability items. It was hypothesized that race and gender would also have an effect on social desirability response, but these hypotheses were not supported.

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INTRODUCTION

In personnel selection, measures are often used to determine the extent to which an applicant's responses to a questionnaire or any self-report are truthful. One type of these measures is a social desirability scale, which gives an indication of the individual's attempt to present a favorable impression of personal qualities. This "attempt" is often seen as dishonest, a purposeful or idiosyncratic ruse to gain employment. Because "lying" has such negative connotations and implications, the term "impression management" is often used to refer to this response bias.

A response bias (social desirability is only one of many) is any response or response style which may improperly influence the answers provided by an applicant. In such an instance, the construct validity of the selection instrument is brought into question because the actual content of the tool may not be addressed. The individual presenting a favorable evaluation in the measure may not be giving a true indication of her/his typical behavior or attitude, but rather the answers that he/she believes will be viewed as socially appropriate.

In evaluating the applications of individuals,

employers often set a "cutoff" score for acceptability or rejection of these applications based on the number of socially desirable responses given by an individual. Apparently, these businesses believe that anyone who gives an unexpected number of positive items cannot be trusted. Individual differences in the tendency to supply socially desirable responses do not seem to be taken into consideration. Due to other factors which may influence socially desirable responding, the assumption that these responses are no more than an effort to deceive or present one's self in a favorable light may be problematic. Furthermore, an accepted cutoff point across individuals may be inappropriate. Taking into account a person's community involvement, frequency of interpersonal interaction, and social skill, socially desirable responses may be true responses.

Given that this "response bias" of social desirability may, in fact, be an indication of true behavior, we should examine if social skill as defined by one's subgroup norms or culture plays a role in determining these responses. Furthermore, if such differences imply adverse impact for certain groups who may be more likely to give such responses, research in this area is definitely warranted.

Therefore, I will present further information on social desirability as well as the tools that are used to measure it. This will be followed by proposed reasons why community

involvement and social skill may play a role in individual differences in responses on social desirability measurements. Based upon this reasoning, I will provide a number of hypotheses pertaining to the issues of community involvement, social skill, race, and gender, as they relate to social desirability response.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

The major problem with social desirability, as seen by researchers and practitioners, is the effect it has upon questionnaire validity (e.g. Bernreuter, 1933). During the last 40 years, social desirability response has been a concern in measuring personality (e.g. Edwards, 1953) and self-reports of sensitive behavior (Goode & Hart, 1952), among other constructs.

Explanations for socially desirable responding (SDR), as well as measurements of SDR are numerous. Personality constructs previously credited with influencing SDR include need for approval (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), repression-sensitization (Byrne, 1964), censure avoidance (Allaman, Joyce, & Crandall, 1972) and self-deception (Paulhus, 1984). Rarely do researchers credit the individual with providing truthful responses due to social adjustment (McCrae & Costa, 1983) or learning acquired from social reinforcement (Edwards, 1957). Although these latter two are seen as more plausible in this paper, it is not the purpose of this paper to deny that any individuals may, in fact, respond dishonestly. Certainly some individuals will portray themselves dishonestly to an extent in a self-report. The

mistake on the part of the researcher and practitioner, I believe, is the generalization of certain levels of response across individuals. Some individuals who respond to these items honestly, may receive a high score because of a real tendency to behave in the socially desirable fashion. Honest responses by these individuals may result in scores that are inflated above a critical cutoff score. In addition, this interpretation questions the construct validity of SDR.

A method believed to give a more accurate score on content measures is to partial out correlations between the content measure and the social desirability scale(s). Another tactic to improve the validity of scores believed to be contaminated with social desirability is to adjust the raw score in relation to the score on an SDR measure (e.g. Norman, 1967). This is done by regressing the content score on SDR. The corrected score is the residual found in the regression equation. Instead of adjusting an individual's scores, however, the scores may be discarded if the SDR level is above a critical cutoff score. A cutoff score may be determined by purposely providing favorable or unfavorable responses, or by providing some respondents instructions to fake good or fake bad (e.g. Helmes & Holden, 1986). According to my hypothesis, however, these cutoff scores may be set too low or set inappropriately because they do not account for cultural or subgroup differences in SDR.

Furthermore, research (Holden & Fekken, 1989) indicates that the more well-known instruments used to determine levels of SDR are not highly correlated. Factor analyses of these measures generally yield two factors that explain SDR (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1989). One cluster is associated with the general anxiety factor of the MMPI (Block, 1965) and the second with another factor of the MMPI (Wiggins, 1964) which measures agreeableness and traditionalism. Paulhus (1986) proposes that these two SDR factors represent (a) self-deceptive positivity (an honest but overly positive self-presentation) and (b) impression management (self-presentation tailored to an audience). While the latter of the two factors is indeed plausible in many instances, the contention is with the former, "Individuals may give an honest but overly positive self-presentation". What standards are used to determine "overly positive"? How do we know that this is a misrepresentation of actual behavior? This is the evaluation to be made with the majority of social desirability scales.

Three of the social desirability measures that have received the most attention from researchers are a) Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1984, 1988) b) Edwards (1957) Social Desirability Scale, and c) Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1984, 1988), or BIDR, is designed to measure the

constructs of self-deception and impression management
(mentioned above). The focus of the items pertaining to
self-deception is ego enhancement. Thus, the development of
these items involved overly positive judgments of individual
attributes. The impression management dimension of this
scale was based on the belief that individuals would be less
likely to admit to the frequency of negative actions
performed while exaggerating the amount of positive
behaviors performed. These rationally developed items
involve overt behaviors (e.g. I never take things that don't
belong to me) so that any distortion is interpreted as a
deliberate lie.

The 40 items are rated by the respondents on a seven-
point scale. For each extreme response (6 or 7) an
additional point is given to each total score on the entire
measure. This rationale ensures that only individuals who
dramatically emphasize positive traits or behaviors will
score highly on the measure.

The scale was administered to a sample of 884 religious
adults (no information was given as to the racial make-up of
the sample) by Quinn (1989). Means for the self-deception
items were 7.6 (s.d.=3.1) and 7.3 (s.d.=3.1) for men and
women, respectively. Means found for the impression
management items were 7.3 (s.d.=3.1) and 8.9 (s.d.=3.1) for
men and women. The internal consistencies for the self-
deception measure ranged from .68 to .80 while reliabilities

ranging from .75 to .86 were found for the impression
management scale. The measure as a whole had a reliability
of .83 (Paulhus, 1988).

A second scale of social desirability was constructed
by Edwards (1957). In doing so, he selected 150 items from
several MMPI scales (F, "plus-getting" and test validity; L,
the Lie scale; K, the dissimulation or "faking good" and
"faking bad" scale; and the Manifest Anxiety scale [Taylor,
1953]). These items were given to ten judges (no race or
gender specified) to rate each item's social desirability.
The final version incorporated the 39 items which best
discriminated between high and low scorers. These items are
judged to have either extremely high or extremely low
desirability ratings. The self-deception factor of social
desirability seems to be measured by this scale, as
indicated by high correlations with measures of adjustment
and personality, which have been related to self-deception
(Taylor & Brown, 1988). A measure's high correlation with
this scale is interpreted as evidence of a response bias
which is overly positive. With this measure, also, an
"overly positive" score may be incorrectly inferred.

The Marlowe-Crowne Scale consists of 33 True-False
items concerning everyday behavior. The scale was
constructed using 50 items of behavior that were designed to
be culturally approved but performed by almost no one in the
population. These items were judged by a panel of ten

individuals, faculty members and graduate students in the Department of Psychology at the Ohio State University, to determine if the items met the above criteria (it was not mentioned if any women or minorities were included on this panel). Those items which received an agreement of 90 percent or greater (47 items) were included.

This version of the scale was administered to 76 introductory psychology students (again, no numbers of females or minorities were given). An item analysis found 33 items with satisfactory (.05) discrimination between high and low scorers on the scale. Those 33 items were used for the final scale. Internal consistency and the test-retest correlation for the scale were both .88.

This scale is based on the belief that the majority of people, at some time, perform the negative behaviors and fail to perform the positive behaviors. Therefore, denial of the undesirable items and endorsement of the desirable items are viewed as responding in a socially desirable manner. While the Marlowe-Crowne scale does correlate with self-deception, it correlates more highly with impression management. Again, as mentioned before, it is my assertion that "impression management" may be a result of honest responses on the part of some identifiable subgroups.

Paulhus (1986) gives several recommendations and cautions in interpreting high correlations between self-reports and SDR. Studies have shown that controlling SDR

reduces the predictive validity of content measures
(Borkenau & Amelang, 1985; Kozma & Stones, 1988; McCrae,
Costa, Dahlstrom, Barefoot, Siegler, & Williams, 1989;
McCrae & Costa, 1983; Ruch & Ruch, 1967). SDR measures that
involve self-deception (such as the Edwards or Marlowe-
Crowne scales), according to Paulhus (1986), apparently will
lower the predictive validity of content measures that tap
the construct of self-deception such as well-being,
perceived control, and self-esteem.

Paulhus (1986) does, however, recommend that impression
management be controlled in specific job-selection
situations. This would be done by determining a cut-off
score using a mean difference between subjects instructed to
give a favorable impression and those not given such an
instruction. Paulhus (1986) concedes, though, that in some
personnel selection situations a high scorer on an
impression management scale may actually be beneficial (e.g.
public relations).

Another potential inadequacy of most SDR scales is that
they contain "improbable" responses. If it is hypothesized
that the majority of individuals will not be responding
truthfully when these items are endorsed, then there should
be little differentiation among applicants and few
applicants would endorse such items according to this
definition of "accurate" responses. If this were the case,
then it would be of little benefit to include these

measurement tools. They would not be measuring socially
desirable behaviors, or the propensity to perform socially
desirable behavior, because there would be little range
between people, giving no indication of individual
differences in behaviors within actual situations.

However, there **are** individual differences in responding
to these items, and it is possible that the individuals who
have "aberrant" scores **do** respond truthfully. These
differences in responses may be related to community
involvement and social skill as defined culturally or
normatively by certain subgroups in our society. In this
case, it cannot be directly determined how the responses to
these social desirability scales should be evaluated. If my
thesis is correct, members of these subgroups cannot be
evaluated properly using the standards of the majority
group. Differences in interpersonal interaction and social
competency and tendency to respond in a socially desirable
manner may be indicative of real cultural differences and
not indicative of inappropriate job behavior. These
differences, I believe, are influenced by one's community,
community involvement, and the social competency that
results from this involvement.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Involvement in the community can serve several
functions which may increase individual levels of
interpersonal interaction and social competency. Among these

are: 1) development of group goals, community or societal cohesion, 2) a problem solving medium to deal with problems encountered within the community, and 3) provision of an atmosphere of sociability (Smith, 1966). Participation in these community groups lends itself to situations where socially desirable behavior is essential to make sufficient progress to the collective goal.

It is difficult to argue against the notion that increased exposure to such interpersonal situations would increase individual knowledge of accepted and expected behavior when in the presence of others. It would also follow, then, that these individuals who are aware of the more socially accepted behaviors would be more likely to perform these behaviors than someone who is not familiar with the aspects of interpersonal etiquette.

Not only would these behaviors constitute social desirability, they would become the social norm. These relationships with others in the community would essentially dictate the actions which are expected of its members (Fischer, 1982), such as to be polite in public with friends and avoid shaming those within the community (socially desirable behaviors).

Furthermore, the strength of interpersonal ties in the community would impose a degree of social control upon each individual involved in the community (Fischer, 1982). Therefore, more socially desirable behaviors would be

demonstrated and required in interpersonal situations. Individuals living in such a communal environment would be much more concerned with how they are viewed by others and would be equipped with the necessary skills to avoid negative evaluation by others.

In relation to social desirability scales, if these individuals are concerned with their presentation on a questionnaire, they should also be as concerned, or more concerned, with their behavioral presentation among others. In interpersonal situations, particularly among peers, these individuals would be under closer scrutiny and any deviant behavior would be subject to direct scorn or verbal disapproval. Therefore, individuals who wish to be seen in a positive light would adjust their actual behavior accordingly. Consequently, responses on a social desirability instrument would be reflective of actual behavior in such situations as depicted in the questionnaire items.

It could be argued, of course, that these individuals would not be acting out of kindness or goodwill in their everyday behavior. They may only present a favorable appearance to avoid rejection by others. This may well be the case, but the end result remains the same. For example, an individual may avoid presenting gossip about others, regardless of how much the individual may be tempted to do so, if she/he realizes that gossiping is unacceptable

behavior. Therefore, if a questionnaire item asks whether or not the individual gossips about others, the answer would still be "no" and that answer would be truthful.

Finally, levels of community involvement are affected by individual perception of problems within the community and a need to form an alliance to achieve group goals (Hallman, 1984). When situations arise to make community members aware of similar needs and circumstances, more developed forms of community involvement are created (Warren & Warren, 1977). Korte (1988) also found that neighborhoods where members were well acquainted with one another had more community involvement, which is consistent with previous findings (e.g. Unger & Wandersman, 1983). This involvement and acquaintance would serve to further strengthen the ties within the community. I believe that this involvement is different from the desire for social interaction with others. I see this community involvement as developing from an awareness of community problems and a perceived obligation to help solve these problems (regardless of anticipated social interaction). Often, individual tendencies to interact or not interact may be put aside because the community itself is of main concern. This is exemplified by the saying "If not me - who? If not now - when?". In this case, an individual who usually prefers not to interact with others may view the problems of the community as more important than her/his reluctance to

participate in a potential social atmosphere.

It is my contention that perceptions related to community involvement may also be affected by race and gender, where certain subgroups may feel disadvantaged in society (to be addressed later).

SOCIAL SKILL

Unfortunately, the literature relevant to social skill has focused upon maladaptive or maladjusted behavior (Doll, 1953; Trower, Bryant, & Argyle, 1978; Wine & Smye, 1981). Therefore, research on the normal population in the area of social skill is limited. The term social skill (often used interchangeably with "social competence" or "interpersonal competence") can incorporate many facets of interpersonal behavior such as empathy (Hogan, 1969), sociability (Cheek & Buss, 1981), and self-monitoring (Snyder, 1979). Thus, one accepted definition would be impossible. For the purposes of this research, "social skill" will refer to individuals' experience in, and seeking of, interpersonal interaction and the skills which may be acquired through such interaction. These skills include being comfortable around others, approaching and making new acquaintances, and the ability to present themselves and their organizations positively.

Two major themes in the literature on social skill are collaboration and adaptability. Collaboration refers to the desire of the individual to obtain not only personal goals, but facilitate goal achievement of others as well. According

to Pearce (1976), this is indicative of social skill. This ability to collaborate with others would appear to be a necessary result of working with others to achieve goals, such as in a community organization. Consequently, gaining such an aspect of competence is one skill which would enable one to be more comfortable around others and approaching new acquaintances.

The ability to respond appropriately in changing situations, or adaptability, is also considered a major characteristic of the socially competent person (Steffen & Redden, 1977; Sundberg, Snowden & Reynolds, 1978). An aspect of this element is behavioral flexibility, which refers to one's ability to adjust one's behavior according to each encountered situation and the constraints it entails. This adaptability would appear crucial in presenting one's self or one's organization in everyday, as well as, novel situations.

To acquire these skills, Bandura (1965) tells us that certain behaviors are acquired through social learning, which would entail observing others. When we witness individuals being rewarded (e.g. a smile or pleasant conversation) we are more likely to acquire and exhibit these behaviors than if we had not been exposed to such behavior at all. According to Goffman (1959), we engage in verbal and nonverbal impression management when we interact with others. We also rely on others for cues when an

ambiguous situation is presented (Friedman, 1979). I,
therefore, see it as a reasonable assumption that the more
models an observer witnesses, the better generalizations
that individual can make regarding appropriate (socially
desirable) behavior across people and situations.

The present study, therefore, views social skill as a
learned skill. This is consistent with the views of McFall
and Twentyman (1973), who propose that socially unskilled
individuals never acquired the appropriate responses in
interpersonal situations. Those more experienced with
interpersonal situations are seen as more likely to have
acquired the necessary knowledge of what is expected of each
individual in social interaction. Thus, through personal
experience, or the observing of others, these individuals
have the opportunity to assess what is appropriate and
inappropriate behavior. Mere exposure to others' behavior
is not sufficient to acquire and imitate such behavior.
However, I believe acting in a more socially desirable
manner is, however, more likely among these individuals than
among those who lack such experience and skills.

In fact, several aspects of social skill have been
found to be significantly correlated with social
desirability. Riggio (1986) found three such aspects
(social sensitivity, social expressivity, and social
control) which were correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne
Social Desirability Scale (-.31,.26,and .48; all

significant).

Social sensitivity was defined as having the knowledge of generally accepted behavior and norms (ability to assess appropriate and inappropriate behavior). Socially sensitive individuals are also seen as being attentive to the behavior of others (learning through observation). Therefore, these individuals may be more concerned with the appropriateness of their own behavior. The negative correlation may be due to the fact that the definition in this study also included social anxiety and taking the behaviors of others too personally, which may inhibit social interaction. Those having the knowledge of appropriate behavior, yet not overly self-conscious are of more concern in my thesis.

A second aspect of social skill is social expressivity. This skill involves the ability to engage others in social interaction and initiate conversations with others (approaching and making new acquaintances). Also found in Riggio's study was that extroversion correlated (p< .01) with the social expressivity dimension of social skill. This would, of course, facilitate opportunities to interact with more individuals, and thus enhance one's knowledge of interpersonal skills. Therefore, one would expect that a measure of extroversion would correlate significantly with social skills in this current study as well.

The third skill, social control, involves social self-presentation (ability to present one's self or one's

organization positively). These individuals are socially
adept and self-confident and able to adjust their behavior
according to each social situation. This indicates the
knowledge of appropriate behavior which would result in the
person acting in a more socially desirable manner.

Of course, correlations with the Marlowe-Crowne scale
do not, in themselves, imply causality. However, I see it
as unlikely that a person can wish to be seen as socially
desirable or avoid negative evaluation independently of
others. In other words, a person who would endorse socially
desirable responses would most likely do so because s/he is
influenced by others or by the opinion of others. Even in
the event that the individual responds so as to view
her/himself in a favorable light, s/he would still probably
use social norms to determine what a "favorable light" is.
Therefore, it is unlikely that a person can be aware of
which responses or actions are socially desirable without
exposure to social situations. Because the development of
social skills appears to require social interaction, it is
not seen as plausible that social desirability directly
causes social skill. While the concern to be seen as
socially desirable may cause one to seek the skills to do
so, the skills can only be acquired through actual
experience. The concern to be socially desirable cannot be
evident to others unless socially desirable behavior is
performed. It is the position of this research that these

skills actually lead to socially desirable <u>behavior</u> and
responses.

An anticipated shortcoming of the above finding of
Riggio (1986) is that all four scales (social sensitivity,
social expressivity, social control and social desirability)
were measured through self-reports, which are often seen as
subject to personal bias. However, social competency
measured through self-reports has been found to correlate
with peer-reports of social competency as well (Buhrmester,
Furman, Wittenberg, and Reis, 1988).

It is important that an individual's perception of
his/her own behavior is shared by those who actually observe
the behavior of that individual because it lends validity to
such measures, at least for the concept of social skill.
Furthermore, friends of the individual would be most
familiar with that person's typical behavior. Thus, the
measurement of social skill through self-reports may indeed
be an accurate description of personal behavior and
interaction and verified by those who are the objects or
observers of such behavior.

The content of social desirability items is often
related to social skill or social skills. Thus, the
responses given to these items may be indicative of true
behavior and/or beliefs about one's behavior. These
behaviors may be more prominent among particular subgroups
of the population. In use with personnel selection

(pertaining to job-related behaviors), therefore, scores may
be inappropriately corrected, resulting in a negative impact
upon these subgroups.

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

Ironically, a high score on a social desirability scale
may be indicative of the person having adopted the social
values of her/his cultural subgroup, but among researchers
and practitioners, these high scores may be seen as
undesirable self-enhancement. Social desirability, as stated
earlier, is often viewed as simple impression management or
self-deception (Paulhus, 1984) which is thought to distort
other responses on a questionnaire or application. However,
the arguments of the research presented above suggest other
possible reasons why individuals may endorse socially
desirable responses on a questionnaire. These reasons
include indications of actual behavior and the avoidance of
misrepresentation.

The items I believe that may have content which will be
affected by the above arguments are presented in Appendix A.
For example, an item from Paulhus's self-deception scale
"My first impressions of people usually turn out to be
right", could actually tap a person's ability to interpret
the actions (verbal and nonverbal) and behaviors of others.
This, as mentioned earlier, is a characteristic of social
sensitivity, or being attentive to others. Therefore,
perhaps the socially sensitive individual is more adept in

her/his observations and judgments of other people, which could lead to an "exaggerated" endorsement of this item.

Also, in Paulhus's impression management scale (items I believe are influenced by my arguments are presented in Appendix B) an item such as "I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back" could be influenced by one's community. It may be that if the listener is also a friend of the person being insulted, the listener may sense a responsibility to tell this person. This would perhaps not be seen as gossip, but rather as "looking out" for his or her friend. As another example, the item "I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget" is related to community involvement. Attempts to "get even" with individuals within the same organization may prove to be counterproductive in accomplishing group goals.

As argued above community involvement and social skill may influence an individual to actually behave in a more socially desirable manner, regardless of sincere or insincere motivation. It has been suggested (Loo, 1980) that in some situations lie scales (social desirability scales and lie scales may be used interchangeably) may provide truthful responses and that positive responses to such scales may be the result of conditioning into socially conformist behaviors (such as within a community). Notwithstanding actual negative affect or ambivalence toward others, individuals who actually <u>behave</u> in a socially

desirable manner are those most likely to possess the necessary skills to be accepted among others and those persons who are most desirable in work situations in which it appears that measurement of social desirability would be justified.

Another possible reason why these individuals may have elevated levels on a social desirability scale is that they are attempting to avoid being seen as impolite or inconsiderate, as the expected responses (by those who see social desirability as impression management or self-deception) would indicate. It is stated implicitly by those who view social desirability as impression management or self-deception that the only truthful answer is "no". Any individual responding otherwise is either intentionally lying to the evaluator of the questionnaire or unintentionally to themselves.

This may not be the case at all. It may be impression management, but in a different sense. Impression management, as seen by Paulhus (1984) involves intentional distortion of actual behavior patterns, but the type of impression management which is possible may involve <u>preservation</u> of actual behavior patterns. For example, an item which asks, "I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble" (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) and only provides possible responses of "True" or "False" simply does not allow any differentiation with respect to actual behavior patterns.

If one individual <u>almost</u> always helps people without delay and one individual <u>never</u> helps people without delay, the absolutely true answer for both individuals would be "No". However, the individual that almost always helps may not wish to be seen as someone who never or rarely helps (which is possible with a "no" response). Therefore, that individual may respond "Yes", giving a more representative indication of his/her typical behavior. This could further escalate the score of individuals who actually do engage in more socially desirable behaviors and wish to respond in a manner which would reflect that behavior. Therefore, a wider range of responses (e.g. "almost always", "sometimes") must be provided for these individuals before one can assume that he/she is lying. Otherwise, a person who actually behaves in a socially desirable manner cannot give an honest **and** accurate representation of his/her behavior. If he/she usually helps without hesitating, a "False" response could be interpreted as a lack of concern for others, which would not be true of that individual. On the other hand, if the individual responds "True" it is seen as a lie. Such items from the ABLE (Assessment of Background Life Events) scale are presented in Appendix C.

If the arguments presented above are accurate, these response scales for social desirability measures may be inadequate. Use of these dichotomous response scales could contribute to the problem of discerning the truthfulness of

responses on social desirability scales.

RACE

Another factor which may predispose an individual to socially desirable behaviors and thus, socially desirable responses, is culture. Obviously, cultural differences exist among various races, such as between Blacks and Whites. One of these differences may be the extent to which members in these racial communities interact with one another (within the same race). As contended earlier, the amount of interaction with others, within one's subgroup, may facilitate the development of social competency, as defined by that culture. The hypothesized result is that individuals who achieve such competency are more likely to behave and respond to questionnaires in a socially desirable manner. It is hypothesized that Blacks will be more likely to attain social competency (as defined by that culture) due to the higher frequency of interaction within one's culture among Blacks than among Whites. In addition, as previously noted, involvement in the community is often predicated by a perceived sense of necessity to join together to achieve group goals (Hallman, 1984). Due to not only perceived, but statistical, disadvantages among Blacks, it is more likely that these groups will seek and form community groups to assess these needs and goals. In fact, strong bonds between families and communities is seen as characteristic of Blacks (Presser, 1980; Rainwater, 1970; Stack, 1974), whereas

Whites engage in less informal involvement (Mitchell, Barbarin, & Hurley, 1981).

Two major strengths of the Black community, as noted by Hill (1971) are a strong connection with church groups, and that, in many ways, the entire Black community is seen as a family. The family-like atmosphere among the Black community, I believe, would serve to increase and strengthen the social ties of each of the members. The resulting social control would cause a greater adherence to the social expectations and norms within the community. These social norms would most likely correspond with behaviors that are viewed as socially desirable. The church, among Blacks, provides a natural setting for social interaction (Gary, 1990). Gary (1990) believes that the Black church serves additional roles: 1) economic development, 2) educational development, 3) group and identity values, 4) leadership development, 5) social support, 6) protest and political development, and 7) psychological support.

Of particular interest among the above functions of the Black church are protest and political development. This function may also be the result of another motive to be involved in the community -- racial consciousness (Shingles, 1981). Increased group consciousness has also been the result of the efforts by Blacks to fight against racism (Gooley, 1990). Blacks, who often view themselves as treated unfairly throughout American history (Wilson, 1980), may

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feel that they must depend on their own resources to improve their status in society. This would lead to increased community involvement and community groups. White males, however, perhaps see little need to form such alliances or have such alliances readily available to them to cope in a society where they are the majority. Therefore, they are less likely to meet only among themselves **and** in more diverse settings, such as Blacks (and other minorities) and women. As previously hypothesized, the result would be greater interpersonal interaction, greater cultural social competency, and the exhibition of more socially desirable behavior among Blacks than among Whites.

In addition, Blacks must exhibit more behavior flexibility because of their minority status. This is due to the fact that they must adapt not only to the Black subculture, but to the majority White subculture as well (Boykin and Toms, 1985). A Black person raised in a Black community must, in most instances, interact with the majority population, especially in obtaining employment. In such an instance, there would be great motivation to present one's self favorably, in light of perceived racial inequality with regard to achievement for Blacks in America (Wilson, 1980). Whites on the other hand, could conceivably not interact significantly with members of a minority group and still achieve any level of success. Therefore, they may not achieve the degree of behavioral flexibility necessary

to adapt to situations where they may have to interact with others of another subculture.

GENDER

Gender may also play a role in social desirability scales due to similar reasons given for race. Women, also, often perceive dissimilarity in their treatment by society in comparison to men. This could be an underlying reason for the development of women's movement groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Eagly (1987) found that gender differences in emotion (emotion skills and social skills being interrelated) are necessary for both men and women to adapt to their roles in our culture. Brody and Hall (1993) state that this is evident in women's lower status and power. Women also face discrimination in the workplace where they may feel the need to adapt to a male- dominated environment. Women, therefore, would learn to exhibit more social skills than would men.

In addition, a review by Brody and Hall (1993) found that women are superior to men at interpretation of facial, voice, and nonverbal cues. This ability to decode the expressions of others would facilitate one's exhibition of the appropriate (socially desirable) response. Furthermore, females are also more personal in their self-disclosures (Brody, Hay, & Vandewater, 1990), which could be interpreted as being more comfortable around others. Also, according to

Brody and Hall (1993), women display more warmth and happiness (emotions which are related to affiliation and self-consciousness) than men. Affiliation is also shown in women's tendencies to express their own shortcomings while accentuating positive aspects of others. These characteristics of nonverbal decoding, self-disclosure, and affiliation are seen as indicative of social skill and, apparently, women display more of these traits than do men. Therefore, if my hypothesis is correct, women will have higher self-reports of social skill and social desirability.

In summary, responses on social desirability scales could be influenced by an individual's involvement in the community, experience with others, and the hypothesized result of this interaction -- social skill. Further, Blacks and women, I believe, would be involved in more social groups in the community than White males due to political groups designed not only for the community as a whole, but for their subgroups in the population as well (the latter being less prevalent among White males). This increased involvement in the community and other people and resultant social skill should produce heightened scores on the social desirability measures used in personality tests.

If Blacks and women do score higher on social desirability scales, while responding accurately with respect to their beliefs about their own behavior, the validity of personnel selection tests incorporating these

scales could be jeopardized. I believe that this could lead to inappropriately lowered scores for these two groups, leading to adverse impact when these measures are used.

My arguments with respect to the interrelationships of race, gender, community involvement, and social skill and their impact on measures of social desirability are summarized in Figure 1 and in the following hypotheses. Based upon the above reasoning, the following hypotheses are offered:

H^1: The scores of Black individuals will be higher than those of White persons on social desirability measures.

H^2: Race will also be correlated with community involvement and social skill as defined above such that Blacks will achieve higher scores than Whites on these measures.

H^3: The relationship between race and social desirability scores will be mediated by community involvement and social skill as indicated in Figure 1.

H^4: The scores of women will be higher than those of males on social desirability measures.

H^5: Gender will also be correlated with community involvement and social skill as defined above such that women will achieve higher scores than White males on these measures.

H^6: The relationship between gender and social
desirability scores will be mediated by community
involvement and social skill as indicated in
Figure 1.

H^7: Higher scores by Blacks on social desirability
scales will result in adverse impact when scores
on these scales are used to "correct" scores on
other measures.

H^8: Higher scores by women on social desirability
scales will result in adverse impact when scores
on these scales are used to "correct" scores on
other measures.
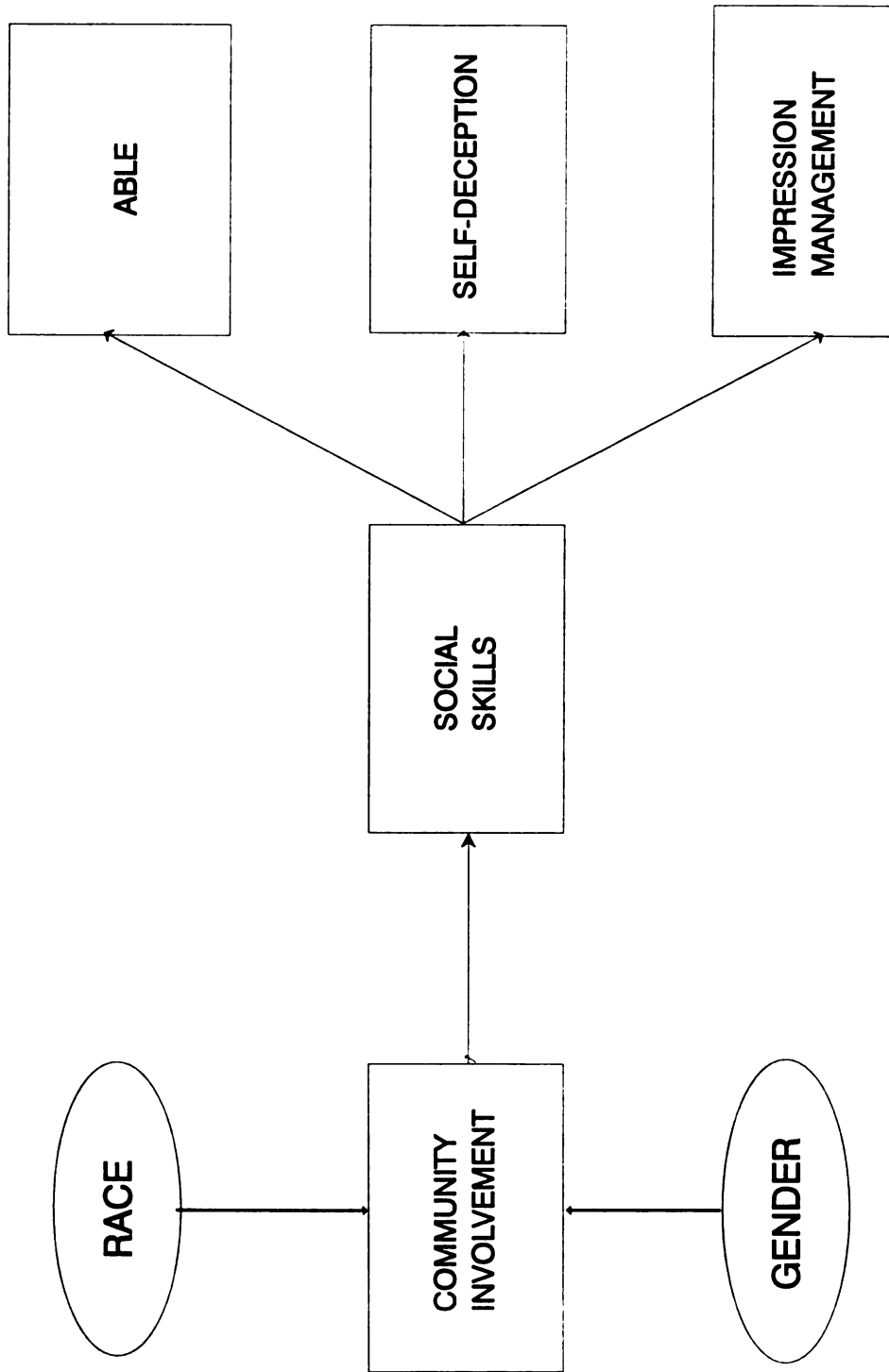
FIGURE 1: HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACE , GENDER, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, SOCIAL SKILLS AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY RESPONSE

METHODS

SAMPLE

The participants in this research were 227 members of a federal investigative agency who took a battery of experimental tests designed to assess job related skills and personal characteristics of applicants to this position. The individuals had one to five years of experience in this agency. However, the race and gender could not be identified for some subjects. Therefore, the identifiable (by race and gender) sample consisted of 109 White males, 29 White females, 21 Black males, and 3 Black females. This contributed to a restriction of the representation of subgroups to be evaluated and compared in the study. It should be noted that for analyses not pertaining to race or gender the entire sample of 227 was used.

PROCEDURES

The archival data were collected in a pilot study to develop a personnel selection battery for this investigative agency. Using several cities across the country as data collection sites, the measures were administered to job incumbents who were told to take the tests as if they were applying for a position. The tests were also administered as

if an actual hiring process was taking place. Complete administrative instructions are detailed in Schmitt et al (1993).

MEASURES

The measures used included the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) developed by Paulhus (1984,1988), with self-deception items (Appendix A) and the impression management items (Appendix B) incorporated. Because these two measures are purported to measure two different constructs and have previously high reliabilities they were used as separate indicators of social desirability. Items taken from the Assessment of Background and Life Experiences (ABLE), a biographical data inventory, also served as measures of social desirability (presented in Appendix C).

Therefore, although social desirability has been described in this study as a single construct, self-deception, impression management and the ABLE items were used as separate indicators of social desirability and were not analyzed in aggregate form.

To indicate community involvement and social skill, two scales have been developed from responses of a small group of incumbents to a set of biodata items (presented in Appendix D). I believe that the items chosen tap these constructs.

The items in the community involvement scale were selected from the biodata instrument used and the scale itself was developed to ascertain individual levels of contribution to one's community through formal organizations. Therefore, I believe that items such as "How much time do you volunteer to help service groups in your community?" and "To how many civic organizations (i.e., school boards, PTA, Kiwanis, etc.) do you belong?" are adequate measures of community concern.

However, no items were available in the biodata instrument to measure one's intent or motivation to become more involved in the community. Also, the items do not provide a measure of one's belongingness to the community which would give a better indication of perceived responsibility to assist in solving community problems.

To measure the aspects of social skills, items were chosen from the same biodata measure as was the community involvement scale (the social skills scale is presented in Appendix E).

Social sensitivity (ability to assess appropriate and inappropriate behavior) was a construct to be tapped by items such as "What do you normally do when you become frustrated by someone?". This response, I believe, would give an indication of an individual's knowledge of appropriate behavior when dealing with others. To measure the second aspect of social skill, social expressivity

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(approaching and making new acquaintances), I chose items such as "If you were at a party at which you didn't know many people, what actions might you take?" and "How enjoyable do you find it to talk to people you don't know?". I believe these items are directly related to this dimension of social skill because they involve not only making new acquaintances but actively seeking such acquaintances given the opportunity. In addition, they address individual motivation for this behavior. That is to say, a person may approach new acquaintances simply to make contacts for self benefit, whereas another individual may approach others regardless of the others' capacity to serve any instrumental purpose. For example, the item "When you have encountered the maids or janitors in your apartment, dorm, or office building, you have...(four options given)" indicates personal interaction where no benefit can be gained (other than the interaction itself). Social control (ability to present one's self or one's organization positively), the final dimension of social skill in this study, was measured by items such as "When working in a position that required a lot of contact with the public, has your supervisor ever received communication commending your performance?" and "How comfortable are you in social situations?". Because social control entails self-presentation as well as adaptability to new situations, the items "When faced with new situations or places, you...(three options given)" and

"How quickly do you feel you adjusted to college-life during your freshman year?" were also included.

Although three dimensions of social skill have been given, they will be treated as one aggregated construct. Unfortunately, there were not enough available items to create reliable separate scales for these individual aspects of social skill. Therefore, they will be combined to provide one construct of social skills for the data analyses.

Finally, to determine the extent to which social skills and extroversion are related, the extroversion scale from the NEO-PI was included in the analyses (presented in Appendix F).

DATA ANALYSIS

A path analysis using LISREL 8.03 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1985) incorporated tests of Hypotheses 3 and 6 along with a test of the overall model (Figure 1). This model posits that race and gender contribute to community involvement. This involvement increases individual social skill which in turn increases the endorsement of social desirability items. This analysis was also used to determine if there were significant direct, as well as indirect, effects of race and gender on social skills and social desirability response. A Chi-square goodness of fit index was used to test the model and various other indices of fit were computed and reported.

To evaluate hypotheses 1,2,4 and 5, tests of significance of the correlations between race and gender

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with scores on community involvement, social skills, and social desirability were performed.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 were examined in several steps. Initially, I planned to correct total test scores (i.e. personality, situational judgment, and biodata) by using the procedures suggested previously. Specifically, correlations of SDR with total scores would have been partialled out and the content score would have been regressed on SDR measures to test for differential prediction of overall performance ratings. Likewise, prediction equations without correction for SDR would have been computed. Cutoff scores for social desirability were to be set using each equation and the difference in the number of women and Blacks hired with the two computed predictor scores were to be the indication of adverse impact. These procedures were eliminated and replaced with new analyses due to several factors revealed in the study and discussed in the Results section below.

RESULTS

The correlations of race and the hypothesized related variables -- social skills, community involvement, self-deception, impression management, and the items from the ABLE scale -- (means, standard deviations, reliabilities and inter- correlations for the scales are given in Table 1) are all non-significant with values of .019, -.047, .066, -.063 and -.018, respectively. Similar findings were revealed with respect to gender, yielding correlations of .035, -.035, -.066, -.075 and -.024, respectively. Thus, predictions that race and gender would have an effect on these variables (hypotheses 1,2,4, and 5) were given no support. Additional analyses were performed to determine the relationships between extroversion and the observed variables (also in Table 1) because it was suspected that outgoing individuals would have a stronger tendency to participate in community activities and have higher levels of social skill.

TABLE 1

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, RELIABILITIES AND
CORRELATION MATRIX OF OBSERVED VARIABLES^

	Mean	**SD**	**r_{xx}**
Social	30.46	4.70	.75
Commun	4.82	3.21	.69
ABLE	3.49	2.58	.54
Self-deception	12.73	2.59	.54
Impress	13.17	2.91	.67
Extrover	3.76	4.06	.72
Race	1.15	.45	
Gender	1.20	.39	

* Sample size for Social through Extroversion is 227. For
Race and Gender the sample size is 162.

** Race and gender coding: (White=1) (Black=2) (Male=1)
(Female=2)

	Social	Commun	ABLE	Socdesii	Impress
Social					
Community	.47**				
ABLE	.34**	.18			
Self-decp.	.41**	.16	.39**		
Impress	.14	.15	.35**	.68**	
Extrover	.79**	.39**	.27*	.39**	.19*

^corrected for unreliability

** indicates significance at .01 level; * indicates
significance at .05 level; other values are non-significant

The reliabilities for two of the social desirability scales (self-deception and impression management) were surprizingly low with respect to their given reliabilities from .68 to .80 for the self-deception scale and from .75 to .86 for the impression management scale found in previous studies. This may have served to restrict the correlaions of the scales with other variables. In addition, the low reliabilities and high correlation between these two scales may suggest that there was another or a similar factor being measure by the self-deception and impression management scales, which are purported to measure two different constructs.

A path analysis (using Lisrel 8.03) was performed to test hypotheses 3 and 6. The model was somewhat modified, eliminating race and gender, due to the lack of significant results in the above analyses. Thus, the abbreviated model (see Figure 2) predicted that community involvement would be a predictor of social skills which would, in turn, be a predictor of social desirability response. Because social skills was viewed as a mediator variable, I also hypothesized that community involvement would have no direct effect on social desirability response.
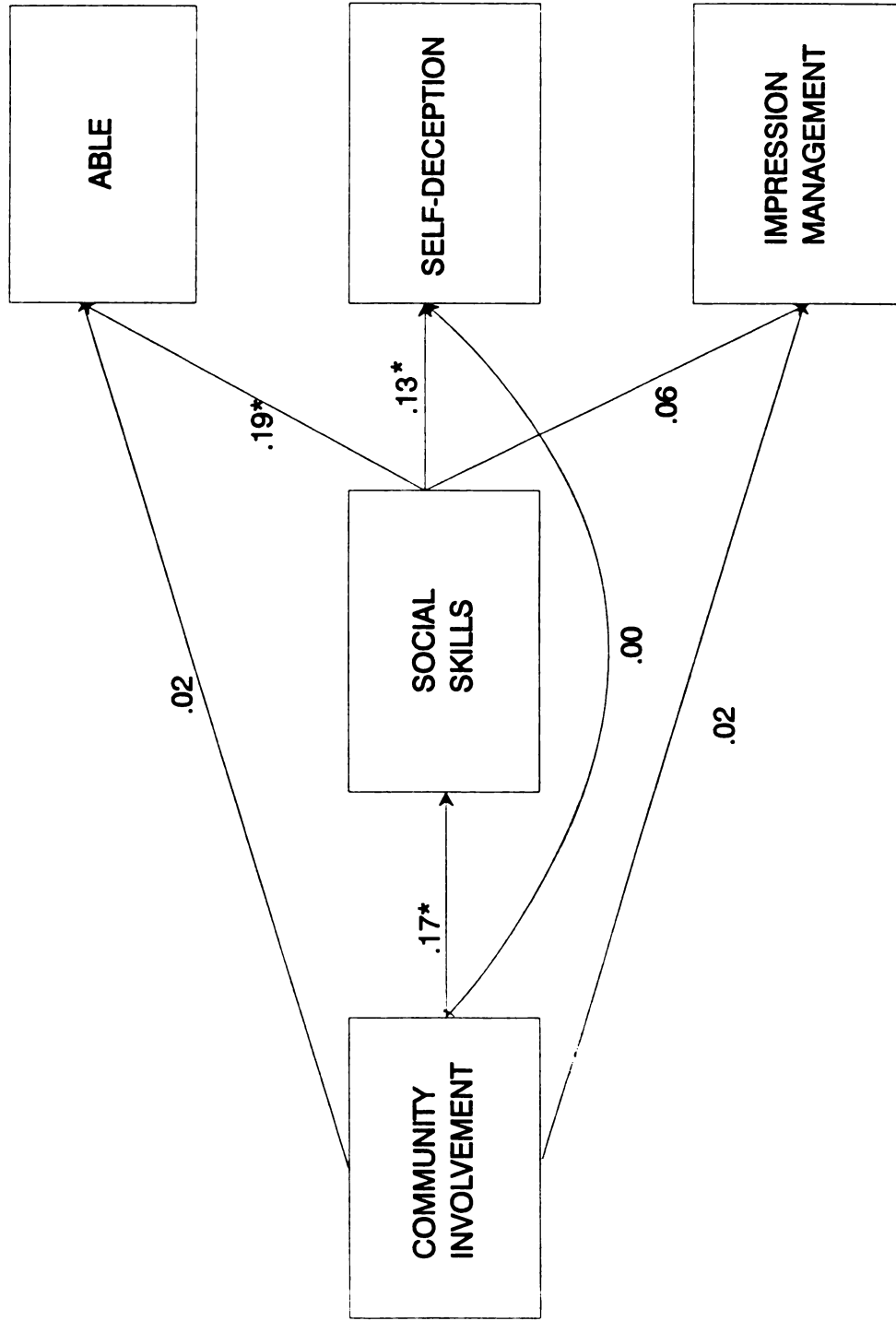
FIGURE 2: PATH ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, SOCIAL SKILLS AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY RESPONSE (REVISED MODEL)

*indicates significance at p< .05

The chi-square test of model fit for the model that did not include direct effects of community involvement on social desirability measures yielded a value of 51.03 with 11 degrees of freedom. This was significant indicating lack of model fit. However, various other fit indices indicated the model fit the data relatively well. The GFI of .92 and the AGFI of .79 indicate that the model explained a substantial proportion of the variance.

A second model including direct paths from community service directly to each social desirability measure yielded a chi-square value of 49.84. The first model is nested within the second model, so a difference chi-square was computed to test the combined direct effects of community service on social desirability. This chi-square (1.19) was non-significant (df=3). There were no changes in the goodness of fit indices or significant improvement upon the hypothesized path model as a function of the added direct paths. Therefore, I conclude that these paths should not be included in the model.

The path analyses gave significant support for the hypothesized effects of community involvement on social skills, social skills on social desirability response, and social skills as a mediator of the relationship between community involvement and social desirability for two of the three indices of social desirability. The exception was a lack of an effect of social skills or community involvement

on the impression management dimension. The path coefficient relating community involvement to social skills was .17 (t=5.42, df=6, p<.05) but there were no direct effects on the measures of social desirability. The direct effects of community involvement were .02, .00, and .02 for the ABLE scale, self-deception, and impression management, respectively, all of which were nonsignificant. As previously mentioned, the construct of social skills as measured by the scale used in this study did account for a significant amount of variance with respect to the ABLE items and self-deception but did not correlate with responses on the impression management scale. The path coefficient for the ABLE items was .18 (t=3.38, df=6, p<.05) and for the self-deception items, .13 (t=4.04, df=6, p<.05), but only .06 (t=1.51, df=6, p>.05) for impression management.

Although there were no race and gender effects, eliminating the possibility of changes in adverse impact resulting from use of social desirability scale corrections, analyses were performed to determine the number of individuals that would be affected by correction in scores to reflect high scores on social desirability measures. Typically corrections are made only in extreme cases. For example, examinees' scores may be discarded when they obtain social desirability scores above the 90th percentile on the scales. Therefore, only the number of individuals scoring

above the 90th percentile (and the 50th percentile, as a further example) on the ABLE scale (because it had the highest correlation with social skills) was determined (ABLE - x=3.49, 90th percentile >6). The same procedure was performed for scores on the social skills scale at the 75th and 50th percentiles (social skills - x=30.46; 75th percentile >34; 50th percentile >30).

I took this approach because it was not the focus of this study to determine how many people in general may be affected by social desirability correction. Rather, it was my point to find how many people who may be reporting genuine behaviors (as measured by the community involvement and social skills scales) could be affected. It was never my intention to contend that social desirability scores should never be corrected, but that it should be determined if these scores are a function of individual community involvement and social skills as hypothesized above in this study. If this is the case, I believe, that these scores should not be corrected.

Instead, analyses were performed to determine the possible impact of businesses correcting or discarding applications as a result of individuals' high scores on social desirability measures (see Table 2). Only one test was chosen for analyses because a composite test battery score could not be computed due to the fact that the scoring weights for the entire battery have not yet been determined.

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Also, for some tests in the battery (i.e. cognitive ability), social desirability corrections would not be appropriate. Therefore, scores on the extroversion scale (Costa & McCrae, 1978) were chosen as an example of correction effects on a selection test. Conceptually, it seems that the extroversion measure (correlation with ABLE scale: $r=.17$; $p<.05$) would be susceptible to SD bias and empirically extroversion was correlated with both SD and social skills measures. I believe this is so because individuals scoring high on the extroversion scale would be more likely to interact with others (in the community and elsewhere) which would enable to acquire the appropriate social skills. In addition, these individuals (who have attained these skills) would feel more confident in social situations and would engage others in discussions.

In Table 2, I present the number of individuals scoring within the the top 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles on the extroversion scale (see note under Table 2). Of these individuals, I further determined how many scored above the top 90th and 50th percentiles on the ABLE scale while also scoring above the top 50th and 75th percentiles on the social skills scale. This yielded the number of individuals who would be "inappropriately" affected by correction of the extroversion scale using scores on the ABLE.

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIPS OF EXTROVERSION, ABLE AND SOCIAL
SKILLS SCALE SCORES (BY PERCENTILE)

Extrover.	#selected	ABLE	Social Skills	#corrected
8.4%	31	90th	50th/75th	4/4
		50th	50th/75th	10/9
23.8%	67	90th	50th/75th	10/6
		50th	50th/75th	20/14
46.7%	114	90th	50th/75th	16/8
		50th	50th/75th	29/18

* The 'number corrected' reflects the number of scores
that would be subject to correction at the 50th and
75th percentiles of social skills scale, respectively.

** The entire sample of 227 was used for these analyses
instead of the race and gender identifiable sample of
162 due to the lack of correlation between race and
gender and these dependent variables.

*** Due to identical scores on the extroversion scale,
precise 10th, 25th, and 50th percentiles could not be
determined.

As is obvious in the last column of Table 2, a substantial number of applicants (up to 1/3) would have been penalized for high scores on the ABLE scale when an alternative interpretation of the ABLE score is that they possessed a high knowledge of social skills. If scores on the social skills scale are indeed an accurate indicator of an individual's typical behavior, these corrections would be unfair to these applicants. However, it should be noted that I picked a scale for which it was highly likely that these results would be found. Whether similar relationships hold for a broader range of personality and biodata instruments remains to be determined.

DISCUSSION

As indicated by the results of the path analyses, community involvement does play a role in the development of social skills. Those individuals more involved in the community adhere to a more socially desirable code of behavior (as measured by the scales provided) which may be manifested in their everyday actions if their responses to the scale items are an accurate manifestation of these actions. Although the degree of variance in community involvement may have been limited due to the sample used in this study (discussed below), its ability to predict social skill was not eliminated. This is not to say that there is not a reciprocal effect. It could also be that those who attain social skills through community involvement would also have a higher propensity to participate in more community activities due to their confidence and desire to interact with others.

Also, social skills, as predicted, did have an effect on aspects of social desirability response. Also as hypothesized, social skills was a mediator of the relationship between community involvement and social desirability responses. Apparently, as addressed in the

introduction, mere exposure to others is not sufficient to
modify individual behavior. There must be some indication
that certain interpersonal skills were acquired as a result
of that personal interaction which is provided by the social
skills scale. These findings support my hypothesis that an
individual's community involvement often leads to an
increase in her/his level of social skills.

In addition, extroversion had significant correlations
with social skills and community involvement. Therefore, it
is likely that there is a relationship between these three
constructs. One possible explanation is that those
individuals who are more extroverted acquire more social
skills, are more confident during social interactions and
consequently seek to be involved with community activities.
Conversely, it is also plausible that those extroverted
individuals seek contact with others (e.g. through community
activities) and acquire higher levels of social skills. The
data collected in the study, however, prevent a
determination of causality.

Unexpected, however, was the lack of an effect on the
dimension of impression management. Upon further review,
though, this is seen as reasonable. The ABLE and self-
deception items pertain to individual perceptions about
one's self, are open to interpretation, and are less
evaluative than are the impression management items.
Perhaps individuals are more aware of the "correct" response

on the impression management scale because the items lack subtlety. In other words, this scale is easier to fake. The self-deception scale, however, contains items which do not necessarily reflect a negative image on the respondent and the socially desirable response may change according to what characteristics are valued by the evaluator of the scale. For example, the item "I am a completely rational person", can have at least two interpretations. A completely rational person may be excellent for a business executive related position. However, in the case of an advertising applicant, this may be indicative of a lack of creativity.

Therefore, I assert that where the socially appropriate response is more ambiguous, individuals would have a stronger tendency to simply respond as honestly as possible and the responses of individuals with higher levels of social skill would be in the more desirable direction. This would account for the significant effect of social skills on self-deception despite the low standard deviation (.1363) of the self-deception scale (lower than impression management, .1533).

It would appear that the previously mentioned aspects of social skill (social sensitivity, social expressivity, and social control) do apply to the content of the social desirability items. Because it has been previously found that self-reports of socially competent behavior are relatively accurate (Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis,

1988), I believe that these respondents are more familiar with these dimensions of social skills.

Contradictory explanations for the above results could include a possible social desirability component in the community involvement and social skill scales. This is not a significant concern for at least two reasons: 1) the anonymity and lack of evaluation of the participants in the study, and 2) the fact that the use of biodata items generally decreases social desirability (Shaffer, Saunders, & Owens, 1986).

Although I would have preferred to have a larger sample of Blacks and women in this study, I must concede that the correlations found were remarkably lower than expected even given the relatively small proportion of these groups in the sample. Therefore, explanations other than sample size must be offered. I believe that the differences between race and gender may have been minimized as a result of all examinees being incumbents. I previously viewed this as an advantage in anticipation of more honest answers given to the questionnaires due to the anonymity offered to the examinees. However, it is possible that one of the variables, social skills, could actually be learned through job experience. It was my argument that the more interaction one has with others, the greater one's social skills will become. Gaining the cooperation of others is, in fact, a necessary requirement for an effective agent. Therefore,

individuals who did not possess such skills at the onset of employment with this agency may have learned them through others (e.g. their partners or witnesses), perhaps after previously-learned inappropriate or inadequately-learned interpersonal techniques proved ineffective.

Further examination of the correlations with race and gender shows that not only are the correlations for gender (male=1, female=2) and social desirability low, but they are negative. It was found that social skills for women are negatively related to social desirability response. A possible explanation for this is again a function of the positions held by the applicants. Perhaps the female examinees acquire social skills through community involvement (as hypothesized and supported by data) but do not engage in socially desirable behavior or respond in a socially desirable manner because they feel that such behavior would be ineffective. They could believe that they may not be respected or taken seriously due to their gender unless they portray a more "abrasive" personality.

With regard to community involvement, I overlooked the possibility that many incumbents may have joined the agency due to concern over their individual community or the nation's community as a whole. This concern could very well extend itself to other forms of assistance throughout the community, not specifically related to race or to gender (e.g. public education, crime, drugs). If this is the case,

perceived responsibility to the community or desire to solve problems therein may be a shared characteristic across individuals in the sample, regardless to race Therefore, this difference, too, may have been minimized due to the sample tested.

Another reason why the results may not have been as anticipated is the restriction of range for socio-economic status. It is likely that all of the examinees were relatively equal on this dimension and lived in similar neighborhoods. It is also possible that as members of minority status moved into neighborhoods which are not predominately Black they did not have individuals of similar ethnicity with whom to develop any formal or informal community groups based on race. Therefore, racial differences may have been minimized because members of subgroups could possibly have a stronger commitment to the community if their efforts will directly and specifically serve to improve conditions for their respective subgroups within that community. If no such effect is possible, motivation to become involved with community programs may decrease.

An additional consideration is that the job incumbents, once assigned, are not allowed to work within a particular proximity of their home towns (I was unaware of this until shortly before data analyses). This may act to limit each individual's involve- ment in his/her new community (at

least at first).

Due to the above and unanticipated factors, this may have been an inappropriate sample to test these hypotheses as related to race and gender. It may be that the hypothesized effects exist but could not be revealed through this study. Apparently, the determinants of social desirability response presented by the model can account for some variance across populations. However, in other samples, where Blacks and Whites are more ethnically unique and Blacks are represented in larger numbers, the results I expected may be observed.

Lastly, the substantial number of applicants that could be affected by high scores on the extroversion, ABLE, and social skills scale warrants attention. In the worst case scenario, with the top 10th percentile of extroversion, 50th percentile of ABLE, and 50th percentile of social skills scores, as many as 10 out of a possible 31 applicants would suffer from correction. Therefore, potentially qualified applicants may be unnecessarily eliminated from consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present use of social desirability scores may (in research and applied settings), in some instances, be inappropriate. The results of this study show that higher scores on social desirability scales may be indicative of more than an attempt to deceive the evaluator of these measures. Scores on social desirability measures could, in fact, be a function of individual experience in interpersonal contact. Correction of these scores could actually be detrimental to constructs that researchers are trying to measure. In addition, practitioners and employers could focus on social desirability scores as being a reflection of positive interpersonal behavior rather than a liability in cautiously interpreting impressive test scores which may result in false rejections of potential successful applicants. Perhaps some form of community involvement and social skills measurement should be included in such analyses to determine the degree of veracity of social desirability responses before scores are "corrected" to reflect a more accurate score as deemed by researchers and employers. Specifically, I would incorporate a form of the scales used in this study. After setting a cutoff point for

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social desirability scores, I would set a standard score (e.g. above the 75th percentile) for consideration of social skills. Those obtaining a score higher than this score would not have their scores corrected or discarded due to their level of social skills.

However, I do suggest a word of caution in implementing the above procedure. I feel that high scores on community involvement or social skills alone should not be taken as a sufficient indicator of future behavior. Some individuals may posses adequate social skills but choose not to use them in their interaction with others. Therefore, the measurement of social desirability could be used as a substitute for actual behavior to assess the degree to which the applicant engages in socially desirable behaviors (in addition to community involvement and social skills). In this manner, an employer could not only take into consideration future on-the-job behavior but identify those who may be in need of social skills training (given that the individual is qualified on the remaining employment dimensions).

I do not feel, though, that this can be accomplished with the items used in this study. I would suggest more subtle items be used in the social skill and social desirability scales which are tailored to the skills which individual employers seek in job applicants. I believe that this could be done by developing items with more than one

desirable and effective behavior but deciding upon which behavior would be most acceptable in the prospective work environment. This would decrease the ability of the more socially competent individuals to simply provide the response believed to be most suitable.

In addition, scores on these measures could be given some weight in employment decisions concerning potential for organizational citizenship behaviors. This would include assisting others, socialization of newcomers, and perhaps helping to solve conflicts among co-workers. All of these behaviors, while not necessarily improving production, would create a more enjoyable and comfortable workplace for employees. As a result, individual workers may develop stronger ties with each other, experience an increase in job satisfaction and desire to remain in that environment which would work to decrease turnover.

The results of this study may also be relevant to future employment regarding the type of applicant that is sought. As more positions in the workforce become more service oriented, it will be beneficial to employers to hire individuals with the experience and ability to relate effectively with others. This would be true not only in retail settings but in business negotiations as well.

Furthermore, managerial positions also have a social skills component inherent in the effective performance of the job. Characteristics measured by the social skills

scale of this study include the ability to work smoothly with people, desire to interact with people, and responding appropriately when frustrated by another individual. These skills are undoubtedly of particular importance when functioning in a managerial role due to the interaction required with not only superiors but subordinates as well who may not be particularly cooperative.

If this study could be replicated with a more appropriate sample (larger sample of women and minorities) and the hypothesized results were found, it may also have implications for diversity management. As mentioned above, the skills measured may be relevant to managers and therefore social skills could be given some weight in deciding upon promotions or individuals who will be recommended for managerial training when hired by a company. Again, if the hypothesized results were found, this could result in more women and minorities being promoted to higher levels of management without using any type of informal "quota" system. Furthermore, to ignore or penalize persons with high scores on social desirability measures would increase adverse impact and result in obvious legal complications.

In addition, levels of community involvement and social skill may be relevant to positions which require a significant amount of interaction with the public (e.g. a spokesperson or representative). These positions, too,

could be more appropriate for those more apt at dealing effectively with others and thus portraying a more positive image of the company to the community.

FURTHER RESEARCH

To further test this relationship between community
involvement, social skill, and acquisition of social skills
I plan to analyze additional data involving experienced-
based interview responses and behavior during interview
role-playing exercises. If my evaluations of the above
analyses are accurate, I expect that the ratings of these
examinees' responses and behaviors will serve to further
corroborate my hypotheses by demonstrating that individuals
who score higher on the social skills scale also perform
more socially desirable behaviors. If this is the case,
this will present additional evidence of the predictability
of individual behavior through the measures of community
involvement and social skill.

It should also be further examined which jobs entail
the greatest use of social skills and the specific social
skills that are required. It could then be determined which
skills need to be trained to facilitate improvement in job
performance.

Related to this training, organizations could begin
volunteer groups to address community problems as perceived
by their workers. This involvent itself, as shown by this
study, could lead to the acquisition of social skills by the

participants. As a matter of fact, some companies (e.g. Xerox) already permit and encourage employees to become more involved a programs targeted at improving area communities. These programs could actually serve a dual role by not only improving the communities but by improving the social skills of those who volunteer. Perhaps programs like these already in place should be examined to detect any differences in social skills between those who participate in these community activities and those who do not. In addition, perhaps a measure could be given to volunteers before and after their involvement in community affairs to evaluate any effect their experience had on social skills.

This study has shown not only how individual differences can give alternative explanations for social desirability responses, but how these individual differences can be beneficial in determining which applicants may be most suitable for particular jobs which require a great deal of social skill. Finally, one method of acquiring social skills is given - community involvement. In the future, this information should be used to study other methods of acquiring a variety of social skills in natural settings, as opposed to formal training or laboratory studies. If individuals are exposed to such settings, social skills trainers could turn their focus away from simply teaching social skills and towards refining the skills that employees may already have.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

(PAULHUS SELF-DECEPTION SCALE)

APPENDIX A

(PAULHUS SELF-DECEPTION SCALE)

*My first impressions of people usually turn out to be
    right.
It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.
*I don't care to know what other people really think of me.
I have not always been honest with myself.
I always know why I like things.
When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.
*Once I've made up my mind, other people can seldom change
    my opinion.
I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.
*I am fully in control of my own fate.
*It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.
I never regret my decisions.
I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my
    mind soon enough.
The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.
My parents were not always fair when they punished me.
I am a completely rational person.
*I rarely appreciate criticism.
I am very confident of my judgments.
I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.
*It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me.
I don't always know the reasons why I do the things I do.

*Items hypothesized to be affected by community and social
    skill

APPENDIX B

(PAULHUS IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT SCALE)

APPENDIX B

(PAULHUS IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT SCALE)

*I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
I never cover up my mistakes.
*There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of
      someone.
I never swear.
*I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
*I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her
      back.
When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
I have received too much change from a salesperson without
      telling him or her.
I always declare everything at customs.
When I was young I sometimes stole things.
*I have never dropped litter on the street.
I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
I never read sexy books or magazines.
I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
*I never take things that don't belong to me.
I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I
      wasn't really sick.
I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise
      without reporting it.
I have some pretty awful habits.
*I don't gossip about other people's business.

*Items hypothesized to be affected by community and social
      skill

APPENDIX C

(ABLE ITEMS)

(ABLE ITEMS)

Do you always help people without delay?
Have you completely kept every promise that you have ever made?
Have you ever felt unhappy about something?
Have you ever thought an unkind thought about anyone?
Do you sometimes put off doing things that you don't want to do?
Do you sometimes wish you had more money?
Do you always tell the truth?
Have there been times when you have been angry with something?
Have there ever been times when you wished that didn't have to go to school or work?
Did you always do exactly what your high school teachers told you to do?

APPENDIX D

(COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCALE)

(COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCALE)

How much time do you volunteer to help service groups in your community?
  A) Very few hours monthly.
  B) Several hours monthly.
  C) Several hours weekly.

To how many civic organizations (i.e., school boards, PTA, Kiwanis, etc.) do you belong?
  A) 0
  B) 1
  C) 2 or 3
  D) 4 to 6
  E) 7 or more

To approximately how many clubs and social organizations do you belong?
  A) 0
  B) 1
  C) 2 to 4
  D) 5 or more

In the organizations you belong to, which best describes your participation?
  A) You are not very active.
  B) You are a reliable member, but do not wish to hold a position of importance.
  C) You would like to hold an office, but have not been appointed to one.
  D) You have held at least one important office.
  E) You have held several important offices.

Since high school have you ever received a commedation for civic involvement (i.e. good citizenship awards, community service awards, etc.)?
  A) Yes
  B) No

How many times during the past five years have you held a position as president, captain, or chairperson of any clubs, teams, committees, or study groups?
  A) Never
  B) Once
  C) Two or three times
  D) Four or five times
  E) More than five times

APPENDIX E

(SOCIAL SKILLS SCALE)

(SOCIAL SKILLS SCALE)

Which of the following positions would you most prefer?
 A) Moderating a peace talk between two warring nations.
 B) Being the lone astronaut on an important deep space mission.
 C) Quaterbacking a professional football team.
 D) Trekking across the Antarctic with only a team of sled dogs.

In connection with your work, in which of the following have you taken the most pride?
 A) Having been able to avoid any major controversies.
 B) Having gotten where you are on your own.
 C) Having been able to work smoothly with people.
 D) Having provided a lot of new ideas, good or bad.
 E) Having been able to do well whatever management has requested.

If your child's little league team was in desperate need of increased funds, and you were asked to help in some way, which of the following courses of action would you most likely take?
 A) State that you are too busy, although you'd like to help.
 B) Give a monetary donation.
 C) Organize a fund-raiser such as a car wash, cookie sale, etc.
 D) Ask a good friend to help in some way.

If you were at a party at which you didn't know many people, what actions might you take?
 A) Approach as many people as possible and introduce yourself.
 B) Talk exclusively to those few individuals you already know well.
 C) Use those individuals you are acquainted with to introduce you to others you have never met.
 D) Give a polite excuse and leave the party early.

Would your choice of an ideal job be one which
 A) Allowed a great deal of interaction with other people.
 B) Would require working with a small group of people.
 C) Would allow you to work closely with one other person.
 D) Would allow you to work by yourself.

Which of the following best describes your friendships?

A) Large number of casual acquaintances, large number of
    intimate friendships.
B) Large number of casual acquaintances, small number of
    intimate friendships.
C) Small number of casual acquaintances, large number of
    intimate friendships.
D) Small number of casual acquaintances, small number of
    intimate friendships.

How often do you get together socially with friends.
  A) Once or more times a week.
  B) Once or twice a month.
  C) Few times during the year.
  D) Almost never spend time socially with friends.

When you were in school, were you
  A) One of the most active and popular students.
  B) More active and popular than most students.
  C) About as active and popular as most students.
  D) Not quite as active and popular as most students.
  E) Not very active and didn't have very many friends.

When working in a position that required a lot of contact
with the public, has your supervisor ever received
communication commending you performance?
  A) Yes
  B) No
  C) You have never worked in such a position.

How would your peers rate your overall confidence in
interacting with individuals that you do not know very well?
  A) Upper 10% of individuals
  B) Upper 25% of individuals
  C) Upper 50% of individuals
  D) Lower 50% of individuals

When you have encountered the maids or janitors in your
apartment, dorm, or offic building, you have
  A) Usually ignored them because they never greet you.
  B) Usually said hello, but never conversed with them.
  C) Usually say hello and occasionally talk with them.
  D) Almost always greet them and talk with them about their
      family, the weather or their work.

How comfortable are you in social situations?
  A) Always at ease in social situations.
  B) Usually at ease in social situations.
  C) Generally at ease, but occasionally feel uncomfortable
      in social situations.
  D) Only occasionally at ease in social situations, and
      quite often feel uncomfortable.

How enjoyable do you find it to talk to people you don't know?
 A) Almost always enjoy it.
 B) Usually enjoy it.
 C) Occasionally enjoy it.
 D) Do not usually enjoy it.
 E) Almost never enjoy it.

Which of the following situations do you most prefer?
 A) Being alone.
 B) Being alone with pets.
 C) Being with one other person.
 D) Being in large groups of people.

What do you normally do when you become frustrated by someone?
 A) Tell the person off.
 B) Tell the person that (s)he is upsetting you.
 C) Stop talking with the individual and avoid the person in the future.
 D) Hold your tongue, but let off steam to a friend at a later time.

When faced with new situations or places,
 A) You feel comfortable very quickly.
 B) You can adjust fairly well but still prefer familiar surroundings.
 C) You sometimes feel intimidated or uneasy.

How quickly do you feel you adjusted to college-life during your freshman year?
 A) Very quickly.
 B) Fairly quickly.
 C) About average.
 D) Not quickly
 E) Never adjusted to college life.

APPENDIX F

(EXTROVERSION SCALE)

(EXTROVERSION SCALE)

I like to have a lot of people around me.
I laugh easily
I don't myself especially "light-hearted".
I really enjoy talking to people.
I like to be where the action is.
I usually prefer to do things alone.
I often feel as if I'm bursting with energy.
I am a cheerful, high-spirited person.
I am not a cheerful optimist.
My life is fast paced.
I am a very active person.
I would rather go my own way than be a leader of others.

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