

RELIABILITY AND SEPARATION OF FACTORS ON THE
ASSERTIVENESS-RESPONSIVENESS MEASURE

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Summary.—Assertiveness and responsiveness of 102 men and 122 women in college were internally reliable (.88 and .93) and uncorrelated (-.027) factors of self-reported personality style.

For several decades it has been recognized that components of personality combine to influence an individual's behavior (e.g., Myers, 1962). Two of these components make a substantial contribution to the prediction of communication and other social behavioral patterns. Several streams of research have examined essentially similar concerns, although they have referred to the components by different terms. The work of Bem (1974) and others (e.g., Wheelless & Dierks-Stewart, 1981) references these as "masculinity" and "femininity." Within the corporate training arena (TRACOM; Merrill & Reid, 1981; Wilson Learning; Lashbrook, 1974), they are commonly referred to as "assertiveness" and "responsiveness."

A simplified 20-item measure, composed of items drawn from previous research (and essentially similar to items recommended for use by Wheelless and Dierks-Stewart, 1981) and originally intended primarily as an instructional tool (Richmond & McCroskey, 1985), recently has been used in research (Thompson, Ishii, & Klopff, 1990; Ishii, Thompson, & Klopff, 1990). The instrument requests respondents to respond to each item on a five-step continuum (strongly agree: 5, strongly disagree: 1). Items for assertiveness and responsiveness are randomly intermingled when presented to subjects. Assertiveness items include defends own beliefs, independent, forceful, has strong personality, assertive, dominant, willing to take a stand, acts as a leader, aggressive, and competitive. Responsiveness items include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly. The instrument may be used as a self-report or as a report of perceptions concerning another individual.

Data were collected to test the assumptions that dimension scores are internally reliable and that the two dimension scores are not meaningfully correlated. The 224 subjects (102 men, 122 women) were enrolled in college classes in which students are regularly asked to complete self-report instru-

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ments which are then scored and discussed. Split-half reliabilities were computed and the data were subjected to factor analysis with a two-factor oblique rotation examined (a scree test indicated the presence of only two meaningful factors).

Obtained reliability estimates were .88 for assertiveness and .93 for responsiveness. The oblique factor analysis indicated that all items loaded on the intended dimension and none had a loading on the other dimension above .20. Also scores on the two factors were not meaningfully correlated ($r = -.027$). The correlation of scores for the two factors based on raw responses rather than weighted scores also indicated a meaningless association between the two factors ($r = .002$, $p > .97$). These results indicate the primary assumptions underlying use of this instrument are tenable and scores based on raw responses are appropriate. In addition, the previously cited work points to the predictive validity of the measure.

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