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The University of Georgia

I - O P S Y C H O L O G Y

# ASSESSMENT CENTERS ARE DEFICIENT PREDICTORS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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20

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# ASSESSMENT CENTERS FOR LEADER SELECTION

- The premiere approach to leader assessment
  - Predictive validity
  - Positive reactions
  - Legal defensibility
  - Global implementation (Povah & Thornton, 2011)

# TROUBLE IN PARADISE?

- Decreasing criterion-related validity
  - Gaugler et al. (1987) vs. Hermelin et al. (2007)
  - Hardison and Sackett (2004)
- Why?
  - Used with other measures and range restriction?
  - Popularity and lower quality design?
  - Has the nature of leadership changed?

# OVERVIEW

ONE

The Changing Nature of Work

TWO

Personality in Assessment Centers

THREE

ACs and Relational Behaviors: Five Studies

FOUR

Some Troubling Empirical Findings

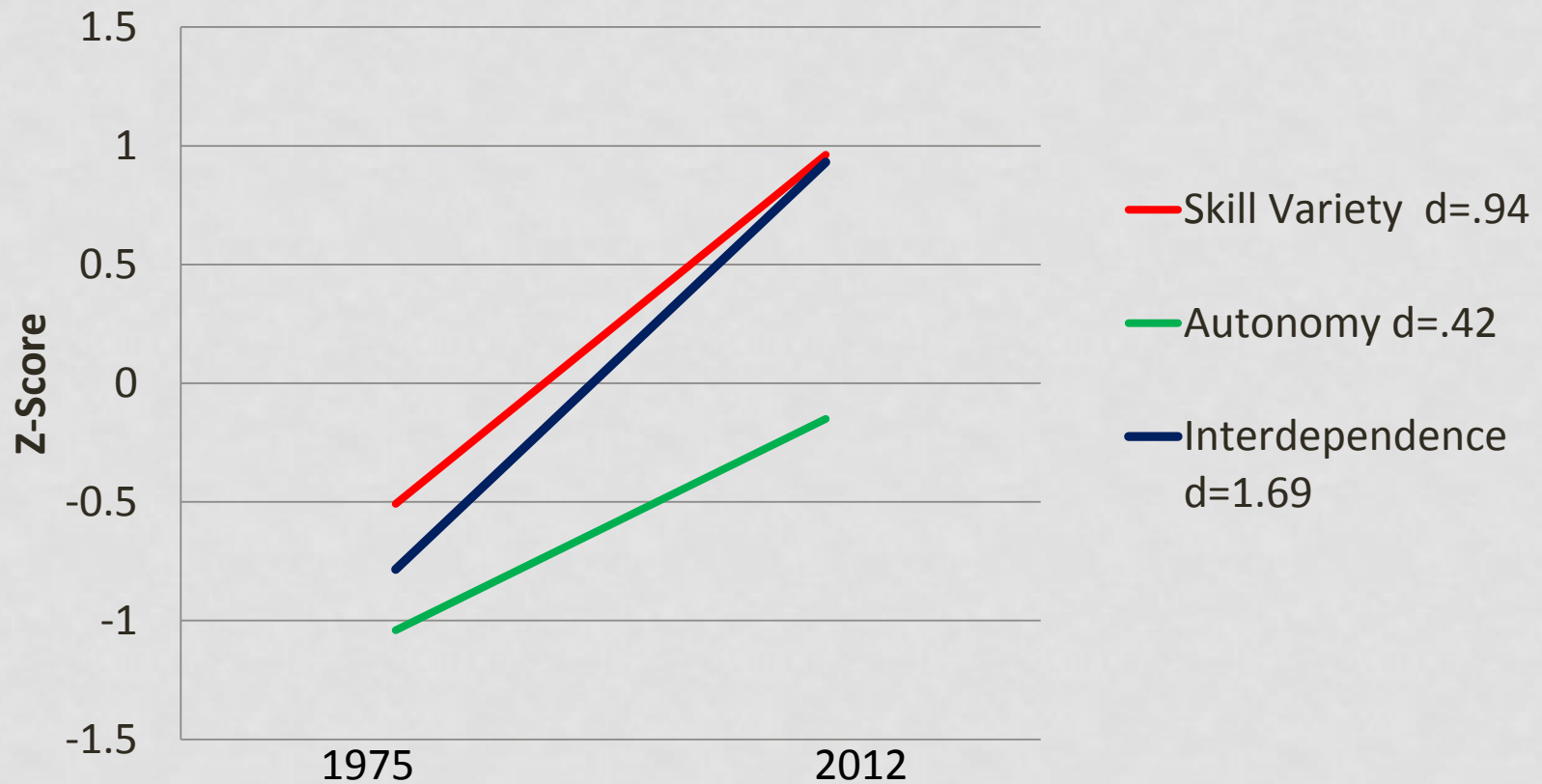
A woman in a light-colored business suit is smiling and looking down at a desk. She is holding a pen over a spiral notebook. On the desk, there is a laptop, a stack of papers, and a small vase with flowers. The background is softly blurred, showing an office environment. The entire image has a warm, yellowish-green tint.

# I. THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK

# FREQUENT DISCUSSION

- ▣ “The world of work is now different than it was then, perhaps fundamentally so,” (Oldham & Hackman, 2010; p.465)
- ▣ Technological and industrial changes >> Greater variety of skills
- ▣ Reduced management and scheduling flexibility >> Autonomy
- ▣ Team-based work and flatter hierarchies >> Interdependence

# CHANGES IN JOB CHARACTERISTICS IN THE U.S.A. SINCE 1975 (WOOD & HOFFMAN, 2014)





# LEADERSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD OF WORK

- ▣ What type of leadership is required to manage autonomous, interdependent, highly skilled workers?
  - More directive, structuring leadership might actually harm employee motivation (Grant et al., 2011)
  - Instead, more communal leadership is needed in the modern world of work
  - CCL's BENCHMARKS (Gentry et al., 2011)
  - Consideration-based leader behaviors and leader effectiveness (DeRue et al., 2011)

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top, is smiling and looking down at a document. She is in an office environment with a desk, a laptop, and some papers. The image has a soft, warm, yellowish tint.

## II. PERSONALITY IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS

# LEADERSHIP IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS

- ▣ But do ACs capture considerate leader behavior?
  - Often assumed that they do
  - Most interpersonally oriented-predictor
  - Measure similarly named dimensions
  
- ▣ Surprisingly little research
  - Correlations with personality offer some clues

# THEORETICALLY GROUNDED APPROACH

- ▣ Socioanalytic Theory (Digman, 1997; Hogan, 1983)
  1. *Getting Ahead*: extraversion and openness
  2. *Getting Along* : agreeableness and conscientiousness
- ▣ “Getting along” and considerate, pro-social, and pro-relational behaviors
- ▣ Which does AC performance correlate with?

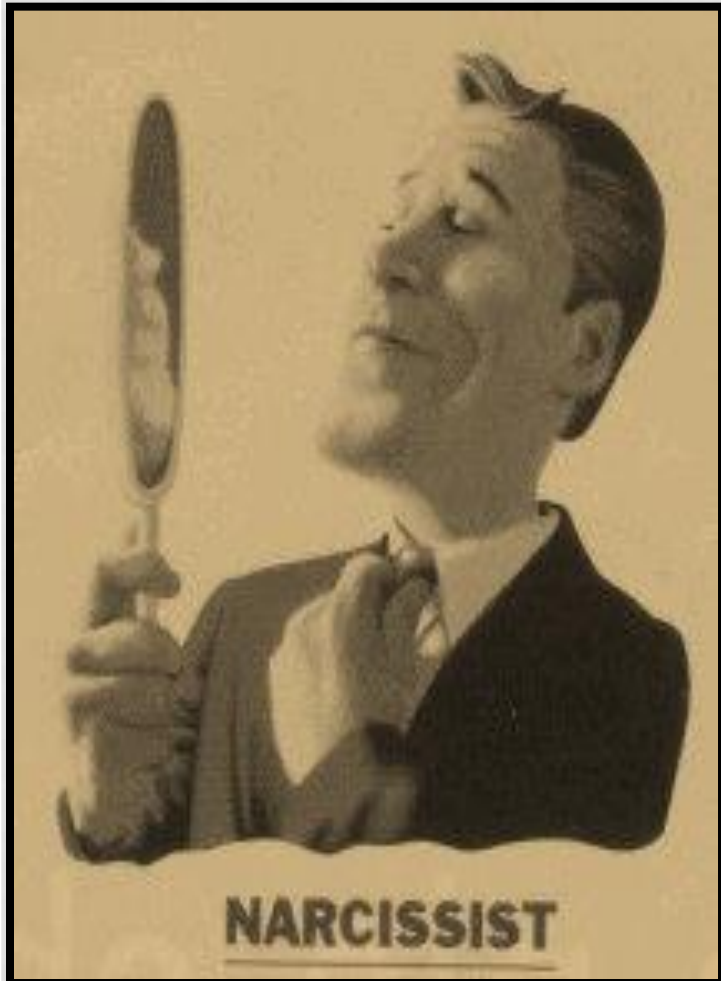
# WHAT TYPE OF LEADER EXCELS IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS?



# PERSONALITY CORRELATES OF ACS

- ▣ Meta-analyses of personality correlations
  - OAR (Collins et al. 2001)
  - Exercises (Hoffman et al., 2014)
  - Dimensions (Meriac et al., 2014)
  
- ▣ Extraversion shows most consistent correlations with ACs
  
- ▣ Sporadic with openness to experience
  
- ▣ No association with conscientiousness or agreeableness

# A TROUBLING TREND



- ▣ Curious
  - Highly extraverted, relatively more open but not conscientious or agreeable
  - Narcissism (Brunell et al., 2008)
  
- ▣ Very indirect
  - What we really want to know is if these are associated with on-the-job behaviors of getting along



A person wearing a light-colored lab coat is working on a circuit board. They are using a soldering iron in their right hand and a pair of tweezers in their left hand. A digital multimeter is visible in the upper right corner, displaying '000'. The scene is set in a laboratory or workshop environment.

### 3. ACS AND RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS



# ASSESSMENT CENTERS AND WORK BEHAVIORS

- ▣ ACs predict task performance (Arthur et al., 2003; Gaugler et al., 1987)
  
- ▣ But what about getting along behaviors?
  - Organizational citizenship behaviors
  - Considerate leadership
  - Transformational leadership
  - Leader member exchange

# DO ACS PREDICT RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS?

- ▣ Five studies
  - Do ACs predict “getting along” behaviors at work?
  
- ▣ Methodological Considerations:
  1. Establish correlations with task performance
    - Show AC works as normal
  2. Task performance and relational behaviors tend to be strongly correlated
    - Control for task performance
  3. ACs measures multiple dimensions
    - Strong test by looking specifically at getting along AC dimensions (e.g., consideration of others and sensitivity)

# SAMPLE 1

- ▣ Do ACs predict organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB)?
  
- ▣ AC for developmental feedback for college students  
Switzerland (N = 107)
  - 7 dimensions: analytic skills, organizing, persuasiveness, assertiveness, presentation skills, creativity, and consideration
  
- ▣ Supervisor ratings
  - OCBs: conscientiousness, sportsmanship, altruism
  - Task performance

# Sample 1: OAR and OCB

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

# Sample 1: Cooperation and OCB

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

# SAMPLE 2: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- ▣ Maybe sample 1 didn't work because the OCB is not a leadership behavior
- ▣ Sample 2: individualized consideration
- ▣ Assessment center for Swiss military (N = 96)
  - 8 dimensions: **social contact**, personal attitude, achievement motivation, drive, structuring and planning, oral communication, dealing with conflicts, and influencing others
  
- ▣ Trainer ratings of training performance
  
- ▣ Subordinate ratings of individualized consideration
  - Collected 2 years after the AC

# SAMPLE 2: OAR PREDICTING INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION

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

# SAMPLE 2: AC SOCIAL CONTACT PREDICTING INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION

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



# SAMPLE 3: COOPERATION

- ▣ But the AC in Sample 2 didn't try to measure transformational leadership
  - Maybe better results if try to measure the exact same behaviors
- ▣ AC for developmental feedback for college students (N = 92)
  - 6 AC dimensions: cooperation, organizing and planning, persuasiveness, presentation skills, analytic skills, assertiveness
- ▣ Supervisor ratings on the exact same dimensions of the AC
  - Measured the EXACT same way in the AC and with supervisor ratings
  - Cooperation

# SAMPLE 3: OAR PREDICTING COOPERATION (BOSS)

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

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

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

# SAMPLE 4: RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS

- ▣ Samples 1-3 were a bit non-traditional; let's try some more traditional samples
  
- ▣ Assessment center from large U.S. consulting firm (N = 201)
  - 3 relational dimensions in **both** the AC and from supervisor ratings: fosters teamwork, builds relationships, and fosters open communication
  - Supervisor rating of overall performance

# SAMPLE 4: OAR AND RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS

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

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

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

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

- ▣ Sigh. One more try.
  
- ▣ Assessment center for development in South Africa(N = 88)
  - Supervisor ratings of task, OCB-I, OCB-O, and Voice
  - 5 total dimensions (fosters relationships )
  - Supervisor rating of overall performance

# SAMPLE 5: RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS (AC) AND VOICE

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable			
		OCB-O	OCB-I	Voice	Task Performance
<b>Step 1</b>	Task Performance	.69**	.66**	.63**	
	OAR	-.05	.07	.08	
<b>Step 2</b>	OCB-O				.48**
	OCB-I				.26
	Voice				.27*
	OAR				-.04
<b>Step 3</b>	Task Performance	.69**	.66**	.63**	
	AC-Relationship	-.01	.09	.16*	



# SUMMARY: ACS AND RELATIONAL BEHAVIORS

## ▣ 5 Samples

- Different countries
- Different ACs for different purposes
- Different dimensions and exercises
- Different forms of relational behaviors at work

## ▣ Consistent result

- OAR was unrelated to relational behaviors
- Sometimes weak and negative!
- Even relational dimensions rarely associated with similar work behaviors
- Preliminary evidence for association with voice behaviors



## IV. CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

# SELECTING LEADERS IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

- ▣ The premier and most expensive measure to select leaders
  - Decreasing relevance to job performance
  - Do not predict relational behaviors
  - Talkative, dominant, task-oriented managers
  
- ▣ BUT, relational behaviors are increasingly important
  - Manage highly skilled, autonomous, interdependent workers

# POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- ▣ Short term situation
- ▣ Maximal performance
- ▣ Nature of exercises
- ▣ Top-down style of management

# MEASURING GETTING ALONG IN ACS: ALTER THE DIMENSIONS

- ▣ Participative vs. directive influence?
- ▣ Increase pro-social / cooperative dimensions?
- ▣ Weight pro-social / cooperative dimensions?
- ▣ Skeptical that changing dimensions in isolation is the answer
  - Limited success in the past

# MEASURING GETTING ALONG IN ACS: EXERCISE APPROACHES

- ▣ Consider exercise design
  - Work with a high-performing employee on a project
  - Interaction with peer \*role players\* across organizational units
  - Provide career, not task-based, mentoring
  - Counseling an employee on work-life demands
  - Explicit instructions to come to a consensus in groups
  - The reappearance of role players at a later meeting
  
- ▣ If we cannot?
  - Personality inventories?



## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS



- ▣ We know that ACs predict performance of those in managerial roles
- ▣ What type of leadership?
- ▣ Researchers and practitioners must attend to this question
- ▣ Redesign ACs to better predict relational behaviors

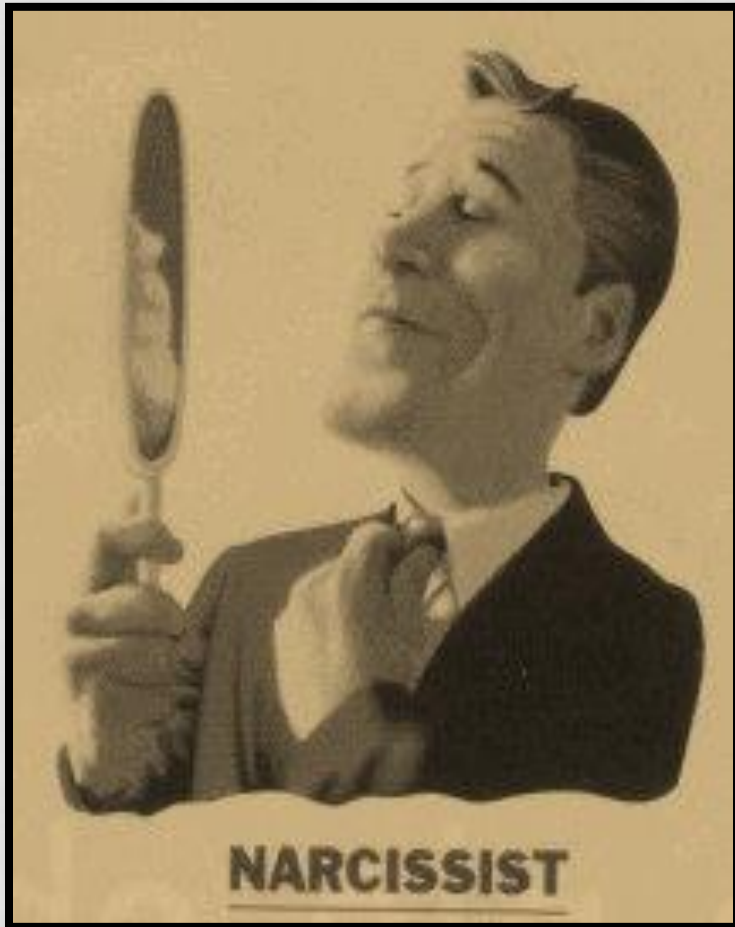


# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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# WHAT TYPE OF LEADER EXCELS IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS?



# THE AVERAGE AC DOES NOT MEASURE “GETTING ALONG”

- ▣ Dimensions and exercises only associated with openness, extraversion, and intelligence (Hoffman, Monahan et al., 2013; Meriac et al., 2013)
  - No overlap with personality markers of getting along
  - Even for “getting along” dimensions (Meriac et al., 2013)
  
- ▣ Minimal evidence for interdependent / cooperative exercise characteristics (Hoffman, Monahan et al., 2013)
  - Interpersonal but not interdependent / cooperative
  
- ▣ Narcissism predicts performance in LGDs, even by trained assessors (Brunell et al., 2008)
  - Similar findings in interviews (Schnure et al., 2011)

# V. CAPTURING GETTING ALONG





### III. PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER