Tintin and the Exploded Confetti Plant: Big One or Big Bang?

René Butter

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Own position in this “essay”:

• Contextualized personality
  • Frame-of-reference approach
  • Narrow traits
  • Ecological scales (Ph.D. Personality Questionnaire)

⇒ Practical approaches that take into account “the situation” and show increased external validity as compared to the Big 5

2 gelijke kolommen

Low trait specificity

High trait specificity

High situational specificity

Low situational specificity

Big Five scales

FOR scales

Ecological scales

Narrow trait scales

Low trait specificity

High trait specificity
Ecological scales

• Standard personality tests are off-the-shelf products that do no take into account the context in which a selection problem is situated

• This partly explains their rather low contribution to explaining job success

• ES’s are tailor-made products that are constructed with/within the target organization

• ES’s have a relatively high ecological validity

• ES’s are better predictors of job success
Historical reflections:

• Inspired by The Mismeasure of Man by Stephen Jay Gould

Verbal analogy item:

• Big 5 → Phrenology
• GFP → ?
• Craniometry
2 gelijke kolommen
Fig. 144.

NAMES, NUMBERS,
AND
LOCATION OF THE ORGANS.

1. AMATIVENESS. 13. SELF-Esteem.
2. CONJUGAL LOVE. 14. FIRMNESS.
3. PARENTAL LOVE. 15. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.
4. FRIENDSHIP. 16. HOPE.
5. INHABITIVENESS. 17. SPIRITUALITY.
6. CONTINUITY. 18. VENERATION.
7. VITATIVENESS. 19. BENEVOLENCE.
8. COMBATIVENESS. 20. CONSTRUCTIVENESS.
9. DESTRUCTIVENESS. 21. IDENTITY.
10. ACQUISITIVENESS. 22. SUBLIMITY.
11. SORGETIVENESS. 23. INITIATION.
12. APPROPRIATIVENESS. 24. INDIVIDUALITY.
25. FORM.
26. SIZE.
27. WEIGHT.
28. COLOR.
29. ORDER.
30. CALCULATION.
31. LOCALITY.
32. EVENTUALITY.
33. TIME.
34. TUNE.
35. LANGUAGE.
36. CAUSALITY.
37. COMPARISON.
38. HUMAN NATURE.
39. SUAVITY.
• Mental testing on Ellis Island New York: ranking persons on 1 dimension

• Heritability: Goddard’s Kallikak family =>
  • Good or bad personality??
Conceptual reflections on G factor versus GFP?

• Similarities, but also important differences=>
  
  • Intelligence tests show positive manifold and Big 5 scales do not
  
  • IQ test items differ intrinsically from personality items (reversing items can produce a GFP)
  
  • \( \omega_h \) (proportion of correlations accounted for by general factor divided by the sum of original correlations) is much lower for GFP than for G (abt. .30 vs. .70)
Psychometric reflections

• GFP argument hinges on correlation between the Big 5 factors

• Why should personality factors be uncorrelated?

• Traits can correlate and still be meaningful “entities”

• Factor analysis does not imply causality

• When (self-report) GFP correlates with other variables (superior rated job success or parent rated behavioral inhibition) no substantive claim for GFP can be made.
Psychometric reflections 2

• Because the Big 5 scores will also correlate with these external variables

• Big 5 does not add variance to a GFP (incorrect test)

• The new test (GFP) must add predictive power to the old one (Big 5)

• GFP and Big 5 are two sides of the same coin in the predictive sense

• GFP is another (simplified) representation of the individual differences

• How does GFP relate to selection psychology (for example predictor-criterion alignment)?
Philosophical reflections

• Risk of reification

• Evolutionary arguments are weak (why should adaptive behavior be based on the same mix for all contexts??)

• Grand narrative (colossus built on shaky foundations)?

• GFP capitalizes on impression management and sanctifies it (high scores are favorable under all conditions) => typical or maximum performance??

• What about authenticity and the dark side?

• Rather reduced perspective on the human condition (one size fits all)
Practical reflections

• GFP does not take into account the context

• How can GFP facilitate (individual) recruitment and selection decisions for specific jobs or any other person-environment fit issue?

• How can GFP support triangulation, for example between personality scores and assessment center simulations?

• How can GFP support developmental coaching?
The Grand Picture...
2 gelijke kolommen
GFP raises many questions and does not (so far) seem to provide convincing answers:

• Historical questions
• Conceptual questions
• Psychometric questions
• Philosophical questions
• Practical questions

=> GFP approach will probably not glue the scattered confetti bits together
Thanks for your attention!