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Self-monitoring as a Determinant of Job Selection in the Workplace

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SELF-MONITORING AS A DETERMINANT OF JOB SELECTION IN THE
WORKPLACE

by

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requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

This study of 112 students from a university in Northeast Florida was designed to determine if there was a relationship between self-monitoring, job structure, and job selection. It was hypothesized that high self-monitors would choose structured jobs more than would low self-monitors. It was also hypothesized that low self-monitors would choose less structured jobs than would high self-monitors. These hypotheses were evaluated by using Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale (1974) to classify participants as high or low self-monitors and by asking participants to role play being applicants offered one of two jobs (structured versus unstructured). Results of this experiment do not support these hypotheses. Limitations, plausible alternative explanations, and directions for future research are discussed.

Self-Monitoring as a Determinant of Job Selection in the Workplace

What is self-monitoring? Self-monitoring is a combination of ability and motivation (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). Snyder defines self-monitoring as "...the differences in the extent to which people monitor (observe, regulate, and control) the public appearances of self they display in social situations and interpersonal relationships." (Snyder, 1987, p. 4) Snyder identifies two distinct types of self-monitors: high self-monitors and low self-monitors. High self-monitors and low self-monitors are distinguished by five dimensions: motivation, ability, attention to cues, use of ability, and consistency of behavior.

One dimension of self-monitoring is motivation (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors are motivated to behave in socially appropriate ways. Low self-monitors are motivated to behave in self-congruent ways. For example, a group of coworkers attending a conference might ask a high or low self-monitor to attend a presentation that this high or low self-monitor does not want to see. A high self-monitor may choose to go along and see a personally undesirable presentation because this behavior would be deemed socially appropriate. A low self-monitor may communicate a desire to either not see this suggested presentation or propose an alternative that would reflect this low self-monitor's motivation to avoid a personally undesirable presentation.

A second dimension of self-monitoring is ability (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors have a well-honed ability to know what behavior(s) are appropriate in different social situations and change their behavior to reflect what is appropriate across social situations. Low self-monitors have a well-honed ability to know their own internal dispositions in different social situations and change their behavior to reflect their internal

dispositions across social situations. For example, in a business meeting where a high self-monitor is commenting on an idea proposed by a boss, this high self-monitor would communicate agreement or disagreement with a boss' idea in a manner appropriate to social context. In a business meeting where a low self-monitor is commenting on an idea proposed by a boss, this low self-monitor would communicate agreement or disagreement with a boss' idea in a manner appropriate to this low self-monitor's beliefs regarding this boss' idea.

A third dimension of self-monitoring is attention to cues (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors focus on emotional and behavioral cues displayed by others in social situations. High self-monitors read nuances of behavior in others so that these high self-monitors can alter their own behavior and act appropriately in social situations. Low self-monitors focus on their internal dispositions and emotions in social situations. Low self-monitors introspect so that they can behave in a manner congruent with their disposition in social situations. For example, a high self-monitor may read boredom or displeasure in faces and body language of an audience as this high self-monitor makes a business presentation. Consequently, this high self-monitor may change tone or content of his or her presentation. A low self-monitor making a business presentation will pay attention to his or her own internal state. A low self-monitor may change tone or content of a presentation based on internal disposition or emotion.

A fourth dimension of self-monitoring is use of ability (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors use their ability to alter their own behavior to display a self-presentation appropriate to different social situations. This use of ability by high self-

monitors is termed strategic self-presentation. Like low self-monitors, high self-monitors may have an ability to be introspective in social situations. However, high self-monitors would rather use their ability to behave in ways appropriate to social situations. Low self-monitors use their ability to alter their behavior to display a self-presentation appropriate to their inner self in different social situations. This use of ability by low self-monitors is termed strategic self-verification. Like high self-monitors, low self-monitors may have an ability to detect social cues and act in a manner deemed appropriate to a situation. However, low self-monitors would rather use their ability to behave in ways appropriate to their inner self. For example, a high self-monitor experiencing stress at work will likely monitor his or her outward expression and demeanor to hide inner anxiety, especially if this high self-monitor believes stressful behavior is inappropriate in this workplace. A low self-monitor experiencing stress at work may also believe stressful behavior is inappropriate in this workplace and be able to change his or her behavior. However, this low-self monitor may display stressful behavior so that outer demeanor is consistent with inner self.

A fifth dimension of self-monitoring is behavioral consistency (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors' behavior varies across social situations. High self-monitors are more concerned with strategic self-presentation than with congruence of their inner feelings and outer behaviors. Low self-monitors' behavior is consistent across social situations. Low self-monitors are more concerned with strategic self-verification than with congruence of social situation and behavior. For example, a high self-monitor's outer demeanor will differ in settings with superiors, peers, and employees. A high self-monitor's behavior may be inconsistent across these interactions. A high self-monitor

may act as an overachiever while interacting with a boss and an underachiever while interacting with peers. A low self-monitor's outer demeanor will be consistent in settings with superiors, peers, and employees. A low self-monitor's behavior will be consistent across these interactions. An overachieving low self-monitor will act as an overachiever in interactions with either a boss or with peers. An underachieving low self-monitor will act as an underachiever in interactions with either a boss or with peers.

High and low self-monitors differ in their view of self. High self-monitors view themselves as good actors (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). High self-monitors realize that their behavior changes depending on social situation. High self-monitors see themselves as pragmatic and identify themselves using external characteristics of relationships (e.g., I am a graduate student, I am a pastor, and I am a pianist); (Snyder, 1979, 1987). Low self-monitors view themselves as true to their own thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Low self-monitors realize that their behavior depends on their dispositions. Low self-monitors see themselves as principled and identify themselves using internal characteristics of personality (e.g., I am friendly, I am liberal, and I am emotional); (Snyder, 1979, 1987).

High and low self-monitors have different social worlds. High self-monitors' social worlds are compartmentalized into relationships for specific activities (Snyder, Gangestad, & Simpson, 1983). For example, a high self-monitor may have one group of friends/associates to engage in recreational activities, another group for political activities, and yet another group for career activities. Compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors tend to have uncommitted relationships with little attachment to individuals in their social world (Leone & Hawkins, 2006). Low self-monitors' social

activities and values (Snyder et al., 1983). For example, a low self-monitor may have only one group of friends/associates to engage in recreational activities, political activities, and career activities. Compared to high self-monitors, low self-monitors tend to have committed relationships with more attachment to individuals in their social world (Leone & Hawkins, 2006).

Self-Monitoring and the Workplace

Job involvement is one aspect of the workplace to which self-monitoring is related (Day et al., 2002). Job involvement is defined as a level of personal connection to a job (Kanungo, 1982). People with high levels of job involvement think of their work as very important and attach to their work a personal sense of worth (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965). Self-monitoring is related to job involvement.

For example, Mudrack and Naughton (2001) studied full-time employees and managers in development of workaholic behavior patterns. Workaholic behavior patterns (i.e., taking on extra duties, emotional connection to work, working overtime without pay) are similar to behaviors of people who have high levels of job involvement. Mudrack and Naughton found a relationship between job involvement behaviors and self-monitoring. Behaviors related to both workaholics and people with high levels of job involvement were similar to behaviors of high self-monitors (e.g., changing outward behavior temporarily for differing work situations or to influence coworkers). In their meta-analysis, Day et al. (2002) reported similar results regarding a relationship of self-monitoring and job involvement. That is, high self-monitors tend to report higher levels of job involvement than do low self-monitors.

Role conflict is another aspect of the workplace to which self-monitoring is related. Role conflict has been defined as a workplace role stressor (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Role conflict is further defined in relation to an individual's place in an organizational chain of command. Additionally, role conflict is related to an individual's sense of organizational goals and whether an individual's role in the organization is coordinated with organizational goals. People with high levels of role conflict perceive inconsistency in a chain of command and lack of harmony in their workplace roles (Rizzo et al., 1970). For example, people with high levels of role conflict may have jobs where a supervisor gives direction that conflicts with an employee's job description.

Dubinsky and Hartley (1986) found a relationship between levels of role conflict and self-monitoring in their sample of retail sales associates. Perceptions of behavioral consistency and sense of structure in the workplace may be factors in the relationship between self-monitoring and role conflict. A high self-monitoring sales associate may exhibit behavior that changes based on interaction with different customers, although this associate's employer may direct salespeople to act consistently for all customers. In their meta-analysis, Day et al. (2002) report similar results regarding a relationship of self-monitoring and role conflict. That is, high self-monitors tend to report higher levels of role conflict than do low self-monitors.

Role ambiguity, another facet of workplace role stressors, is also related to self-monitoring. Role ambiguity is defined as a lack of necessary information given to employees to perform their duties (Rizzo et al., 1970). People with high levels of role ambiguity perceive a lack of structure in their workplace role and/or an inadequate

definition of their position responsibilities or specification of duties in their workplace roles (Rizzo et al., 1970). Self-monitoring is related to role ambiguity.

Dubinsky, Hartley, and Yammarino (1985) found a relationship between levels of role ambiguity and self-monitoring in their sample of retail sales associates and insurance agents. High self-monitoring insurance agents may find their employer's direction vague regarding insurance products and services sold to customers, and thus experience high levels of role ambiguity. High self-monitoring insurance agents would prefer to be directed by their employers to sell specific products to customers who fit into a family, income, and health risk structure pre-defined by an insurance agency. Similar results regarding a relationship of self-monitoring and role ambiguity have been found in meta-analysis (Day et al., 2002). That is, high self-monitors tend to report higher levels of role ambiguity than do low self-monitors.

Organizational commitment is another aspect of the workplace to which self-monitoring is related. Organizational commitment is defined as a relationship between an employee's emotional connection to an organization as compared to what would be considered a normal level of emotional connection to an organization (i.e., organizational norms; Abraham, 1999). Abraham believes organizational commitment is a mediator between emotional dissonance and intention to leave a job. "Emotional dissonance induces job dissatisfaction, which decreases (organizational) commitment and stimulates turnover intentions" (p. 444). There is a negative relationship between self-monitoring and organizational commitment (Abraham, 1999). For example, high self-monitoring employees of organizations tend to experience more emotional dissonance for a number of possible reasons (i.e., role conflict, role ambiguity). High self-monitors experiencing

emotional dissonance in the workplace are more likely to look for another job than are low self-monitors experiencing similar workplace emotional dissonance. A similar relationship between organizational commitment and self-monitoring has also been found in a meta-analysis (Day et al., 2002). That is, high self-monitors tend to have lower levels of organizational commitment than do low self-monitors.

Job satisfaction is another aspect of the workplace to which self-monitoring is related. Job satisfaction is defined as a level of overall fulfillment or liking that an employee perceives in their job (Jenkins, 1993). Jenkins (1993) also found that high self-monitoring employees with low levels of job satisfaction are much more likely to find another job than are low self-monitoring employees with low levels of job satisfaction. Jenkins found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and self-monitoring. A similar relationship between job satisfaction and self-monitoring has also been found in meta-analysis (Day et al., 2002). That is, high self-monitors tend to have lower levels of job satisfaction than do low self-monitors.

Job performance and advancement are additional aspects of the workplace to which self-monitoring is related. Job performance and advancement are measured both objectively (e.g., sales volume, number of promotions) and subjectively (e.g., self-report, ratings; Day et al., 2002). Sosik, Potosky, and Jung (2002) found positive correlations between self-monitoring and measures of job performance and advancement. Similar relationships between self-monitoring and job performance as well as advancement have been found in a meta-analysis (Day et al., 2002). That is, high self-monitors tend to have higher levels of job performance and advancement than do low self-monitors.

Self-Monitoring and Self-Selection

Self-monitoring may be related to self-selection in workplace situations.

Researchers define self-selection as a process by which people choose situations that best fit their personality traits and attitudes (Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997). Researchers also define self-selection as a process by which people avoid situations that are incongruent with their personality traits and attitudes (Ickes et al., 1997). When people self-select situations that best fit their self-perception, their personal dispositions are supported and their words and behavior are perceived to be consistent with their own values and attitudes and better reflections of themselves (Snyder & Ickes, 1985).

People typically put themselves in dispositionally congruent situations (Bandura, 1982; Bowers, 1973). Individuals judge situations to be dispositionally congruent if conditions reflect their self-concepts, attitudes, or personality (e.g., Swann, Wentzlaff, & Krull, 1992; Tesser, 1988). Conversely, researchers have shown that people typically choose to avoid dispositionally incongruent situations (Bandura, 1982; Bowers, 1973). Individuals judge situations to be dispositionally incongruent if conditions do not reflect their self-concepts, attitudes, or personality (e.g., Swann, Wentzlaff, & Krull, 1992; Tesser, 1988).

There are two basic assumptions underlying self-selection: that individuals understand the social psychology of situations they are choosing to enter or avoid, and that individuals have enough self-knowledge to know who they are in context of social situations. Researchers have shown that there is evidence that people understand appropriate behaviors for specific social situations including which situations are conducive to their own attitudes (e.g., Glick, 1985; Snyder & Gangestad, 1982).

Researchers have also demonstrated that individuals have self-knowledge in context of their situational social decisions (e.g., Caspi, Bem, & Elder, 1989; Snyder & Ickes, 1985; Swann, Wentzlaff, & Krull, 1992, Tesser, 1988).

Self-selection may be a key factor in contemplating self-monitoring as a cause of behavior. Some individuals (low self-monitors) tend to behave consistently across various situations, and other individuals (high self-monitors) tend to behave inconsistently across various situations (Snyder & Ickes, 1985). High self-monitors and low self-monitors see themselves differently and may approach varying situations using different self-selection strategies. High self-monitors view themselves as pragmatic and display different behaviors depending on a specific situation (Snyder, 1987). Low self-monitors view themselves as principled and display behavior consistent with their true selves across situations (Snyder, 1987).

High self-monitors tend to engage in strategic self-presentation. Strategic self-presentation refers to how some people specifically select their behaviors to present themselves in a certain desirable way. High self-monitors use strategic self-presentation to present a manner appropriate to each situation (Snyder, 1974). For example, a high self-monitor who goes to a party may behave effervescently regardless of whether this high self-monitor is an extravert or introvert. Low self-monitors tend to engage in strategic self-verification. Strategic self-verification refers to how some people specifically select their behaviors to present themselves in a self-verifying way. Low self-monitors use strategic self-verification to present a manner congruent to their disposition (Snyder, 1974). For example, a low self-monitor who goes to a party will behave effervescently only if this low self-monitor is an extravert.

There is empirical evidence that self-selection strategies differ based on individuals' self-monitoring type. For example, Snyder and Kendzierski (1982) demonstrated a difference in activity selection based on self-monitoring. High self-monitors engaged in an activity regardless of their personal attitude toward the activity. For high self-monitors, the activities they selected reflected situational perspectives. Low self-monitors engaged in an activity only if it is consistent with their personal attitude toward the activity. For low self-monitors, activities they selected reflected their own attitudes.

These differences in self-selection and self-monitoring may also be reflected in the types of jobs or careers people select. High self-monitors may be selecting jobs and careers based on pragmatic, situational parameters. Low self-monitors may be selecting jobs and careers based on principled, dispositional parameters. In keeping with high self-monitors' sense of strategic self-presentation, they tend to make situational decisions based on pragmatic considerations that may or may not reflect their true disposition (Snyder & Kendzierski, 1982). High self-monitors' pragmatic situational choices are revealed in previous research on relationships and social structure (e.g., Snyder et al., 1983, Snyder & Simpson, 1984). Because of low self-monitors' sense of strategic self-verification, they tend to make situational decisions based on principled considerations that reflect their true dispositions (Snyder & Kendzierski, 1982). Low self-monitors' principled situational choices are revealed in previous research on relationships and social structure (e.g., Snyder et al., 1983, Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

When individuals are in a situation in which they are interviewing for a job and are subsequently offered two jobs from which to select, we expect high self-monitors to

make different choices than low self-monitors. If someone seeking a job is given two job offers, a selection of one job over another may be based on these job seekers' interpretations of job descriptions in conjunction with their disposition and self-monitoring type. High self-monitors tend to seek high structure in their personal relationships and social world so they can be "the right person in the right place at the right time," and these high self-monitors may seek this same structure when selecting a job or career. Conversely, low self-monitors tend to seek self-congruency in their personal relationships and social world so they can be "themselves," and these low self-monitors may seek a job or career which allows enough freedom (or low structure) to be themselves within constraints of their workplace. If high self-monitors have job choices with similar perceived advantages, then they may select a job with a higher level of structure. If low self-monitors have job choices with similar perceived advantages, then they may select a job more closely related to their disposition.

Method

Participants

A total of 112 students from undergraduate psychology and business classes participated in this study. Participants volunteered to take part in a study of "Individual Differences in Occupational Choice." In exchange for their participation, participants received extra credit for their grades in a psychology course. Other than a minimum age of eighteen years, there were no restrictions on participation.

A majority (71%) of this sample was Caucasian. Most (83%) of the participants in this sample were between 18 and 27 years of age. There were 58 males and 54 females in this sample. Because other researchers have demonstrated a confound between sex and

self-monitoring (Day et al., 2002), the total number of participants in this study was balanced by biological sex to allow for separate median splits for both males and females. In terms of length of employment at their current job, 26.8% of participants were either not employed or employed in their current job less than six months, 20.5% of participants were employed in their current job between six months to a year, 14.3% of participants were employed in their current job between one to two years, 12.5% of participants were employed in their current job between two to three years, and 25.9% of participants were employed in their current job three years or longer. In terms of the number of hours participants work in a typical week, 17.9% of participants were either unemployed or worked less than 10 hours a week, 14.3% of participants worked between 10 to 20 hours a week, 21.4% of participants worked between 21 to 30 hours a week, 25.0% of participants worked between 31 to 40 hours a week, and 21.4% of participants worked more than 40 hours a week.

Only responses from participants who completed most portions of this study were included in analyses. Three participants did not complete all of this study because of time constraints. For missing responses, a mean from all other participant survey responses was used to substitute for unanswered portions from these three incomplete surveys. Informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants before they began this study. All participants were treated in accordance with the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2002). One male experimenter collected data for all participants. He was certified by the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) following completion of The Protection of Human Research Subjects course (CITI, 2000).

Procedure

Participants completed surveys in groups of up to eight participants. A male experimenter explained this study to each participant. He told participants that this study was designed to find out more about how people select jobs. He also explained that an initial part of this survey would require participants to read a role-playing scenario that included descriptions of two different jobs. Participants would then be asked to select which job they would choose. He further explained that they would answer questions about their chosen job as well as questions about themselves and their feelings about others in an effort to explore whether or not there is a connection between job selection and individual differences.

This experimenter gave participants an informed consent form and verbally summarized this informed consent. To avoid a potential introduction of demand characteristics for this study, this experimenter did not tell participants which specific variables were measured. To control for extraneous variability, a consistent test environment was maintained for all participants that included the same male experimenter for all participant sessions. He memorized and narrated an instructional script for all participant sessions. This experimenter gave each participant a survey labeled “Individual Differences in Occupational Choice” after participants signed their consent form.

Measures

This survey included a hypothetical scenario in which participants were asked to choose between two jobs. Participants’ job selection was a dependent variable for this study. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of two different job sets. One

job set included two job descriptions titled “Marketing Sales Manager” and “Marketing Strategies Manager.” A second job set included two job descriptions titled “Marketing Sales Coordinator” and “Marketing Strategies Coordinator.” Descriptions were derived from actual job descriptions posted on popular job search websites, and all job descriptions were designed to maintain realism. To control for extraneous variability, all job descriptions were identical on a variety of dimensions (e.g., salary, benefits, requirement of bachelor’s degree or related experience) Job descriptions between each job set varied only in manipulations of status. One survey included two job choices which were both high status (i.e., management, executive), and the other survey included two job choices which were both low status (i.e., entry level).

Within one job set, one job description was designed to emphasize a high amount of structure in comparison to the other job description in this set. The other job description within this set was designed to emphasize freedom of movement (or low structure) in comparison to the other job description in this set. In this job set, the “Marketing Strategies Manager” was higher in structure than was the “Marketing Sales Manager.”

For the second job set, one job description was designed to emphasize a high amount of structure in comparison to the other job description in this set. The other job description within this set was designed to emphasize freedom of movement (or low structure) in comparison to the other job description in this set. In this job set, “Marketing Strategies Coordinator” was higher in structure than was the “Marketing Sales Coordinator.”

For each job set, status was differentiated between job choices by using job titles and supervisory roles. For example, a job choice with higher status included “Manager” in its title and would also include a supervisory role. A job choice with lower status included “Assistant” in its title and would not include a supervisory role.

Within each job set, structure (or freedom of movement) was differentiated between job choices by changing which tasks were determined by the person in a described job, as compared to tasks determined by others (i.e., supervisor, management) in a described job. For example, a job choice with higher structure included phrasings such as, “Follows pre-established schedule...,” and “Works under direct supervision...” A job choice with higher freedom of movement (or lower structure) included phrasings such as, “Establishes own schedule...,” and “...works with relatively little direct supervision.”

Participants were asked to put themselves in the job applicant’s position described in the scenario included in this survey. These scenarios used in this study were similar to a situation that many students in college encounter (e.g., “You are graduating from UNF and applying for jobs...,” “Because of upcoming student loan payments...you must start working soon. You decide to take one of the jobs offered.”).

The experimenter measured individual levels of self-monitoring using the 25-item Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1974). Response options to each statement in this scale were in a *true/false* format. This scale was used to measure five dimensions of self-monitoring: motivation (e.g., “At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.”), attention (e.g., “When I am uncertain how to act in social situations, I look to the behavior of others for cues.”), ability (e.g., “I would

probably make a good actor.”), use of ability (e.g., “In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.”), and behavioral stability (e.g., “My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.”).

The Self-Monitoring Scale includes thirteen items with agreement (*true*) as indicative of high self-monitoring (e.g. “In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different people”) and twelve items with disagreement (*false*) as indicative of high self-monitoring (e.g., “I am not particularly good at making people like me”). Participants’ responses to items which disagreement (*false*) indicated high self-monitoring were reverse scored. Answers to all items were scored such that high scores indicated high self-monitoring. Scores for answers to individual items were summed such that high total scores indicated high self-monitoring. Participants are classified as either high or low self-monitors based on a median split of a full range of scores on this scale.

Other researchers have found a Kuder-Richardson 20 reliability of .70 and a one-month test-retest correlation of .83 for scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale (e.g., Snyder, 1974). Other researchers have found a Cronbach’s alpha of .75 for scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale (e.g., Kilduff, 1992). In our sample, a Cronbach’s alpha of .73 was found for scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale.

There is evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale. Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated to scores on Lennox and Wolfe’s Self-Monitoring Scale (1984) (Snyder, 1987). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated with peer ratings of self-monitoring characteristics (Snyder, 1974). Groups of people who are known to not have an ability to

control expressive behavior (e.g., psychiatric patients) score lower on the Self-Monitoring Scale than do a random sample (Snyder, 1974). Groups of people who are known to have an ability to control expressive behavior (e.g., actors) score higher on the Self-Monitoring Scale than do a random sample (Snyder, 1974). Scores on the Self-Monitoring scale are not correlated with scores on measures of extraversion (Snyder, 1974, 1987), social desirability (Snyder, 1974, 1987), or Machiavellianism (Snyder, 1974, 1987).

There is evidence of construct validity for scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale in relationship with workplace variables. Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated to scores on measures of job involvement (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Mudrack & Naughton, 2001). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated to scores on measures of role conflict (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Dubinsky & Hartley, 1986). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated to scores on measures of role ambiguity (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Dubinsky et al., 1985). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are negatively correlated to scores on measures of organizational commitment (e.g., Abraham, 1999; Day et al., 2002). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are negatively correlated to scores on measures of job satisfaction (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Jenkins, 1993). Scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale are positively correlated to scores on measures of job performance and advancement (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Sosik et al., 2002).

We developed two additional items as manipulation checks to ensure that responses are consistent with participants' job choices. At the end of each survey, participants were shown job descriptions from the survey they did not receive. For example, if participants were given a choice between two low status jobs, then these

participants evaluated two high status jobs. If participants were given a choice between two high status jobs, then these participants evaluated two low status jobs. Participants were asked to indicate which of the two jobs described was more prestigious and which job would give an employee greater freedom. Response options to each manipulation check item were job titles for the two job descriptions that the participants read.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Researchers have found a relationship between self-monitoring and sex of participants (e.g., Day et al., 2002; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). In a number of samples (e.g., Day et al., 2000) sex is confounded with self-monitoring; females were more likely to be low self-monitors than high self-monitors, and males were more likely to be high self-monitors than low self-monitors. For our sample, a chi-square analysis was used to determine if there was a relationship between self-monitoring (high versus low) and sex (male versus female) of participants. A significant relationship was found in our sample for self-monitoring and sex of participant, $\chi^2(1, N = 112) = 11.46, p < .001$. Males tended to have higher self-monitoring scores than did females, and females tended to have lower self-monitoring scores than did males.

To control for this relationship between sex and self-monitoring, median scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale were calculated separately for males and females. A median score of 39 was found for males. Males who had a self-monitoring score higher than the median for males were classified as high self-monitors; males who had a self-monitoring score lower than the median for males were classified as low self-monitors. A median score of 35 was found for females. Females who had a self-monitoring score higher than

the median for females were classified as high self-monitors; females who had a self-monitoring score lower than the median for females were classified as low self-monitors. After implementing this method of classification for males and females, there was no confound between self-monitoring and sex, $X^2(1, N = 112) = 1.23, p = .27$.

Main Analyses

It was expected that high self-monitors would select higher structure jobs more often than would low self-monitors across both sets of job descriptions (high or low status jobs). It was also expected that low self-monitors would select lower structure jobs more often than high self-monitors across both sets of job descriptions (high or low status jobs). An interaction was expected between self-monitoring and job structure.

To determine if there was an interaction between self-monitoring and job structure, a multi-way frequency analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was conducted with self-monitoring (high/low) and job status (high/low) as independent variables and job choice (structured versus unstructured) as a dependent variable. There was no main effect of self-monitoring on job choice, $X^2(1, N = 112) = 1.23, p < .27$. When given a choice of two jobs differing in structure, high self-monitors were less likely to choose the higher structure job (34.62%) than they were to choose the lower structure job (65.38%). When given a choice of two jobs differing in structure, low self-monitors were also slightly more likely to choose the lower structure job (55.00%) than they were to choose the higher structure job (45.00%). There was no main effect of job status on job choice, $X^2 < 1.00$. Also, there was no interaction of self-monitoring and job status on job choice, $X^2 < 1.00$.

Secondary Analyses

No specific predictions were made for participants' sex and job selection.

However, it is possible that sex may be a predictor and/or moderating variable regarding job selection in this survey. To determine if there were any effects of participants' sex, a multi-way frequency analysis was conducted with self-monitoring (high/low), job status (high/low), and sex (male/female) as independent variables and job choice (structured versus unstructured) as a dependent variable. There was no significant main effect found for sex of participant on job selection, $X^2(1, N = 112) = 1.26, p < .27$. Males were about as likely to select a higher structure job (53.33%) as were females (46.67%). Females were about as likely to select a lower structure job (49.25%) than were males (50.75%). There was no interaction between self-monitoring type and participants' sex, $X^2 < 1.00$. There was no interaction found between job structure and sex ($X^2 < 1.00$). There was also no three-way interaction found between self-monitoring type, job structure, and sex ($X^2 < 1.00$).

To ensure that job structure and job status were perceived as intended in our survey, several self-report items were included at the end of our survey. Participants were shown job descriptions from the survey they did not receive. If participants were given a choice between two low status jobs, then these participants evaluated the relative status and structure of two high status jobs. If participants were given a choice between two high status jobs, then these participants evaluated the relative status and structure of two low status jobs. Participants were purposefully not asked to evaluate their own set of job choices so that participants' previous choices would not affect participants' perception of these other jobs. Chi-square analyses were performed in type of job (structured versus

unstructured) was one variable and either perceived structure or perceived status was the other variable. As expected, the structured jobs (90.18%) were perceived as having more structure than were the unstructured jobs (9.82%), $\chi^2(1, N = 112) = 72.32, p < .0001$. Also, structured jobs and unstructured jobs were perceived to be equal in status ($\chi^2 < 1.00$). Thus, our manipulations appeared to be successful.

Discussion

Everything else being equal (e.g., salary, benefits, job requirements, perceived social status), we expected high self-monitors to select jobs with higher levels of structure over jobs with lower levels of structure. Because high self-monitors tend to seek structure in their personal and social worlds in order to be “the right person in the right place at the right time,” we expected a similar desire for structure when high self-monitors select jobs. Everything else being equal (e.g., salary, benefits, job requirements, perceived social status), we expected low self-monitors to select jobs with lower levels of structure (or higher freedom of movement) over jobs with higher levels of structure. Because low self-monitors tend to seek a congruency in their personal and social worlds in order to be “themselves,” we expected a similar desire for a lack of structure (i.e., freedom of movement) when low self-monitors select jobs.

Our findings are not consistent with this reasoning. One version of our survey included two jobs which were both low in status but differed in terms of structure. Another version of our survey included two jobs which were both high in status but differed in terms of structure. Overall, high self-monitors chose the higher structure job and the lower structure job with approximately equal frequency across both sets of jobs

choices, and low self-monitors chose the lower structure job and the higher structure job with approximately equal frequency across both sets of choices.

High self-monitors' choice of higher or lower structure jobs in this survey is not consistent with other researchers' findings of how high self-monitors view themselves. High self-monitors tend to see themselves as good actors (e.g., Gangestad & Snyder, 2000) and identify themselves using external characteristics (e.g., I am a graduate student, I am a pastor, and I am a pianist); (Snyder, 1979, 1987). High self-monitors' external definition and opinion of themselves as good actors should lead to their desire for more structure in the workplace so they can define their roles and act the part. Low self-monitors' choice of higher or lower structure jobs in this survey is also not consistent with other researchers' findings of how low self-monitors view themselves. Low self-monitors tend to see themselves as principled (e.g., Gangestad & Snyder, 2000) and identify themselves using internal characteristics of personality (e.g., I am friendly, I am liberal, and I am emotional); (Snyder, 1979, 1987). Low self-monitors' internal definitions and opinions of themselves as striving for internal and external congruency should lead to their desire for more freedom of movement in the workplace so they can be and act as themselves. There are a number of potential reasons why our research results were not consistent with these findings of how high and low self-monitors view themselves when they choose jobs.

Plausible Alternative Explanations and Limitations of Current Study

There are several limitations for this study. One limiting factor is the use of self-report. Behavior is not directly observed using self-report measures, and participants in

our study can only report on their potential job choice. Participants' bias toward themselves and their behaviors may have altered the results of this survey.

Specifically, participants' self-reports may be biased due to social desirability factors. Although participants were assured that their responses were completely anonymous and were encouraged to answer as honestly as possible, it is possible that many participants responded in a manner they perceived to be socially desirable. First, participants may have believed that they figured out the hypotheses associated with the survey. If so, then these participants may have altered their responses to try to fit what they believe are "appropriate" answers (i.e., responses that support our hypotheses) rather than give responses which would be appropriate to their self-monitoring type. Second, participants may see themselves in a more positive manner than their actual behavior would indicate. Participants' bias toward themselves could lead to responses which may not reflect actual participants' personalities. If participants do not respond in ways that reflect their own personalities and self-monitoring type, this could contribute to the null results we found in this survey.

The pool of participants used may be another limiting factor in this study. A majority of participants in this study were Caucasian, between the ages of 18 – 27, and college students. These demographic factors are not representative of other segments of our population. Our sample is a sample of convenience and not a representative sample. When choosing between hypothetical jobs in this survey, it is possible that the comparative youth of our sample may lead to a lack of personal experience necessary to respond in a comparable way to other segments of population actually looking for certain jobs or careers. Age, race, and education may also be factors in participants' behaviors

and attitudes. Participants in our study, in comparison to the population looking for jobs, were generally from more homogenous demographic backgrounds. It is possible that our sample for this survey may not have responded in the same way that a sample with more heterogeneous demographics and who were actually looking for jobs may have responded.

The methodology used for this survey may be another potential limitation. This survey included a role playing scenario in which participants were asked to imagine that they had graduated from school, were looking for a job, and had received two offers. Further, participants were asked to choose between only the two jobs described to them and not think about other options (e.g., look for a third job offer, do not take either offer). Participants taking this survey were role playing, and role playing is not equivalent to actual decisions (Ickes, 1982, Snyder & Ickes, 1985). There were no consequences for participants when they chose a high or low structure job. This lack of consequence may have led participants to be cavalier about their job choice which may have contributed to null results found in this survey (Ickes, 1982, Snyder & Ickes, 1985).

Another potential limitation of this study is that no causal inferences could have been made even if our hypotheses were supported. There is no manipulation of one independent variable (i.e., self-monitoring). That is, self-monitoring cannot be randomly assigned to participants and therefore self-monitoring is not a manipulated variable. There are two problems associated with non-manipulated “independent” variables. First, causality cannot be established in this survey because of a lack of information about directionality. We do not know whether participants’ self-monitoring type would have caused them to choose a specific job or whether their interpretation of job choices would

have caused participants to respond in certain ways to self-report measures (e.g., the Self-Monitoring Scale). Second, causality cannot be established in this survey because of a potential effect of other third variables. Participants' job choices may be influenced by other factors other than their self-monitoring type or the amount of structure described within a job description. One possibility is that participants may have perceived different job orientations (e.g., people-oriented, information-oriented) described within the job choices in our survey. People-oriented or information-oriented job descriptions, in conjunction with participants' self-monitoring type, may influence job choice. Another possibility is that participants may have perceived different levels of status (e.g., managerial, entry-level) described with the job choices in our survey. Differences in perceived status of job choices, in conjunction with participants' self-monitoring type, may influence job choice. Additionally, third variables (e.g., sex of participant, participant work experience) may have interacted with variables in this study to influence job choice in ways unpredicted in our hypotheses. If participants believe they recognize a difference in one of these other variables (e.g., job orientation, job status) or if there are third variables (e.g., sex of participant, participant work experience) that exist within our sample then this may have influenced their job choice.

Future Directions

Researchers have found differences in workplace related behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of high and low self-monitors. Sosik, Potosky, and Jung (2002) found positive correlations between self-monitoring and measures of job performance and advancement, and Day et al. (2002) report in their meta-analysis that high self-monitors tend to have higher levels of job performance and advancement than do low self-monitors. Perhaps,

instead of perceived structure of a job, self-monitors may be differentially influenced in their job choices by perceived job performance and advancement. It is possible that self-monitoring may be related to job choices as individuals identify opportunities for advancement within a job or organization.

High self-monitors view themselves as pragmatic and display behaviors accordingly across situations (Snyder, 1987). Low self-monitors view themselves as principled and display behavior consistent with their true selves across situations (Snyder, 1987). As described previously, Day et al. (2002) found that self-monitoring is related positively (in the direction of high self-monitoring) to job involvement (Lodahl & Kejner, 1965), but that self-monitoring is related negatively (in the direction of low self-monitoring) to organizational commitment (Abraham, 1999) and job satisfaction (Jenkins, 1993). As compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors tend to have higher levels of job involvement, lower levels of organizational commitment, and lower levels of job satisfaction. Relationships between self-monitoring and workplace variables may be evidence that self-monitors seek out positions within organizations due to different individual goals. As compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors' pragmatic behaviors may cause them to be more involved in the jobs they choose, but to be less committed and satisfied with their job choices. As compared to high self-monitors, low self-monitors' principled behavior may cause them to be more committed and be more satisfied in the jobs they choose but not be as involved in their jobs.

Self-monitoring may also be related to individuals' views of their roles in the workplace and their commitment to their work as they select jobs and careers. As described previously, Day et al. (2002) found that self-monitoring is related positively (in

the direction of high self-monitoring) to role ambiguity (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970) and role conflict (Rizzo et al., 1970), but that self-monitoring is related negatively (in the direction of low self-monitoring) to organizational commitment (Abraham, 1999). These workplace variables may be factors used to predict self-monitors' job choices. As compared to high self-monitors, low self-monitors' principled behaviors may cause them to be more committed to their employer, but less ambiguous in their workplace roles and experience less conflict in the jobs they choose. As compared to low self-monitors, high self-monitors' pragmatic behavior may cause them to be less committed to their employer, but experience more ambiguity in their workplace roles and more conflict in the jobs they choose.

Conclusion

Individuals have different reasons for selecting jobs and careers. Personality variables such as self-monitoring may influence how people view and select jobs as well as careers. Findings within this study could be interpreted to suggest that self-monitoring and job structure may not influence individuals' job selection. It is possible that high self-monitors may not select jobs with more structure as compared to low self-monitors. It is also possible that low self-monitors may not select jobs with less structure as compared to high self-monitors. Further research is needed to determine if there are other factors (e.g., job orientation, job status) or personality factors that could influence high and low self-monitors as they choose jobs and enter the workplace.

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Vita

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