Response Latency Measures for Biographical Inventories

Lawrence J. Stricker
Educational Testing Service

David L. Alderton
Navy Personnel Research and Development Center

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Response Latency Measures for Biographical Inventories (Unclassified)

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Abstract

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Response Latency Measures for Biographical Inventories

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Abstract of Technical Report

The technical report, "Response Latency Measures for Biographical Inventories" (Stricker & Alderton, 1991) is summarized below:

This study assessed the usefulness of response latency data for biographical inventory items in improving the test's validity. The ASAP was computer administered to Navy recruits, and the regular score, latency-weighted scores, and measures of deviant latencies were obtained. The latency-weighted scores did not improve the ASAP's validity in predicting six-month retention, when used instead of or in addition to the regular score, and the measures of deviant latencies did not function as suppressor or moderator variables to improve the ASAP's validity. But subgroups of items with different latencies varied systematically in their internal-consistency reliability (with increased reliability for subgroups with shorter latencies), and a small subgroup of items with moderate latencies was almost as valid as the regular score. These findings suggest that latency data may be useful in writing and selecting inventory items.
Project Personnel

The project personnel follow:

Lawrence J. Stricker, Principal Investigator.
David L. Alderton, Co-Principal Investigator.
Lucient C. Chan, programmer.
Thomas Sheridan, programmer
Annette Turner, programmer.
Michael Alvarez, research assistant.
Mark Knapp, research assistant.

Presentations

Stricker, L. J. (1990, November). Response latency measures for biographical inventories. Briefing given to ONR MPT Committee, Arlington, VA.

Future Research Directions

Follow-up research might take several directions.

1. A replication and extension of the present study is needed. The primary focus would be on (a) the comparative and incremental validity of the latency-based measures vis-a-vis standard measures and (b) the unexpected finding that both reliability and validity appeared to be lower for items with either very long or very short latencies.

Three kinds of extensions are in order. One would be to use a more predictable criterion than six-month retention. Thirty-six month retention is one possible criterion, for it is appreciably more predictable than six-month retention (r=.27 vs. .18 to .20; Trent, 1989; Trent, personal communication, August 1986). Other suitable criteria for the ASAP might be disciplinary records, promotions, and recommendations for re-enlistment.
Another extension would be to employ other kinds of inventories. Homogeneous biographical or personality inventories would be obvious possibilities, perhaps less problematic than heterogeneous biographical inventories, like the ASAP.

A third extension would be to use populations for which selection and classification are critical because of the difficulty of recruiting qualified personnel, the expense of training them, or the sensitivity of their duties, and hence even modest improvements in the validity of assessments are of considerable importance.

2. Efforts should be made to partition response latencies into the time consumed in each stage in responding to inventory items (Kuncel, 1973; Rogers, 1974a, 1974b) because each of these times may have different psychological implications. Experimental manipulation of the item properties and stages in responding is critical in this research.

3. Situational influences that affect the importance of response latencies require investigation. Faking studies that simulate the demand characteristics of the operational use of inventories in selection would be feasible and relevant.

4. Psychometric research into optimal methods for weighting individual items and for grouping items by their latencies is called for. Two questions that need resolution are (a) the efficacy of weighting individual items vs. grouping items and (b) the value of assigning minimal weights to items with very long latencies vs. assigning minimal weights to items with either very long or very short latencies.

5. Research into other approaches to using response latency information to improve inventory validity is essential. Recent studies have established
the incremental validity of latency scores for personality inventory scales when combined with the regular scores for the scales (Fekken, 1990; Holden, Fekken, & Cotton, in press; Mervielde, 1988; Popham & Holden, 1990). This line of work is extremely promising and needs to be pursued in real-life operational situations.

6. Investigations of the usefulness of latency data in writing and selecting inventory items are needed. These would include correlational studies that compare the validity of items selected with latency data and items chosen with conventional methods, as well as experimental studies that manipulate latencies, by altering item length and other characteristics, and then assess differences in the items' validity.
References


Distribution List

Dr. Terry Ackerman
Educational Psychology
210 Education Bldg.
University of Illinois
Champaign, IL 61801

Technical Director,
Air Force Human Resources Lab.
Brooks AFB, TX 78235-5601

Personal Analysis Division,
AF/MPXA
SCM0, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dr. James Alpina
1400 Norman Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32605

Dr. Erling B. Andersen
Department of Statistics
Studienstrasse 6
1455 Copenhagen
DENMARK

Technical Director, ARU
5001 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22333

Dr. Ronald Armstrong
Rutgers University
Graduate School of Management
Newark, NJ 07102

OASID (Manpower & Reserve Affairs)
SCM0, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1000

Dr. Ross L. Baker
UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation
145 Moore Hall
University of California
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dr. Laura L. Barnes
College of Education
University of Toledo
2801 W. Bancroft Street
Toledo, OH 43606

Dr. William M. Bart
University of Minnesota
Dept. of Educ. Psychology
330 Burton Hall
178 Pillsbury Dr. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dr. Isaac Bejar
Law School Admissions Services
P.O. Box 40
Newtown, PA 18940-0040

Dr. Ira Bernstein
Department of Psychology
University of Texas
P.O. Box 19256
Arlington, TX 76019-0526

Dr. Thomas G. Bever
Department of Psychology
University of Rochester
River Station
Rochester, NY 14627

Dr. Menachem Birnbaum
School of Education
Tel-Aviv University
Ramat Aviv 69978
ISRAEL

Dr. Bruce Bloom
Defense Manpower Data Center
99 Pacific St.
Suite 153A
Monterey, CA 93943-3231

Cdt. Arnold Bohrer
Sec. Psychological Operations
Rekrutterings-En Selektionsrum
Kvartier Koningen Aarid
Brijsstraat
1120 Brussels, BELGIUM

Naval Supply Systems Command
NAVSPU 5512
ATTN: Sandra Borden
Washington, D.C. 20376-5000

Dr. Robert Brear
Code 252
Naval Training Systems Center
Orlando, FL 32852-3224

Dr. Robert Brennan
American College Testing Program
P. O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52240

Dr. Gregory Candel
CTB/McGraw-Hill
2500 Garden Road
Monterey, CA 93940

Dr. Pat Carpenter
Carnegie-Mellon University
Department of Psychology
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Dr. John B. Carroll
IBM Watson Research Center
User Interface Institute
P.O. Box 704
Yorktown Heights, NY 10608

Dr. Robert M. Carroll
Chief of Naval Operations
OP-0182
Washington, DC 20350

Dr. Raymond E. Christal
USB LAMP Science Advisor
APHL/MOSEL
Brooks AFB, TX 78235

Mr. Huu Huan Chung
University of Illinois
Department of Statistics
101 Illini Hall
725 South Wright St.
Champaign, IL 61801

Dr. Norman Clift
Department of Psychology
Univ. of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1061

Director, Manpower Program
Center for Naval Analyses
4401 Ford Avenue
P.O. Box 16268
Alexandria, VA 22302-0628

Director,
Manpower Support and Relocation Program
Center for Naval Analyses
4401 Ford Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22302-0628

Dr. Stanley Colyer
Office of Naval Technology
Code 222
800 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217-5000

Dr. Hans F. Crombat
Faculty of Law
University of Limburg
P.O. Box 616
Maasstricht
THE NETHERLANDS 6200 MD

Ma. Carolyn R. Cronr
Johns Hopkins University
Department of Psychology
Charles & Eut Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dr. Timothy Davey
American College Testing Program
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243

Dr. C. M. Dayton
Department of Measurement
Statistics & Evaluation
College of Education
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Dr. Ralph J. DeAyala
Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation
Benjamin Blvd., Rm. 4112
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Dr. Lou DiBello
CTERL
University of Illinois
103 South Mathews Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801

Dr. Deepa Desai
Center for Naval Analysis
4801 Ford Avenue
P.O. Box 16268
Alexandria, VA 22302-0628

Chief, Survey and Market Analysis Division
Defense Manpower Data Center
1600 Wilson Blvd., #400
Arlington, VA 22209

Dr. Stephanie Doane
Institute of Cognitive Science
Campus Box 345
Boulder, CO 80309-0345

Mr. Hei-Ki Dong
Bell Communications Research
Room FYA-16297
P.O. Box 1320
Fairfax, VA 22033

Dr. Fritz Drasgow
Office of Naval Technology
Code 222
800 N. Quincy Street
Arlington, VA 22217-5000

Mr. Hai-Ki Dong
Bell Communications Research
Room FYA-16297
P.O. Box 1320
Fairfax, VA 22033

Dr. Stephen Dunbar
224B Lindquist Center
for Measurement
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242

Dr. Donald Dunham
American College Testing Program
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, IA 52243
Dr. Wendy Yen  
CTB/McGraw Hill  
Del Monte Research Park  
Monterey, CA 93940

Dr. Joseph L. Young  
National Science Foundation  
Room 330  
1800 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20550

Mr. Anthony R. Zara  
National Council of State  
Boards of Nursing, Inc.  
625 North Michigan Avenue  
Suite 1544  
Chicago, IL 60611

Dr. Steven Zornetszer  
Office of Naval Research  
Code 114  
800 N. Quincy St.  
Arlington, VA 22217-5500