

## EFFECTS OF SOPHISTICATION AND FAKING SETS ON THE EYSENCK PERSONALITY INVENTORY

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*Summary.*—Personality inventories, by their very nature, are particularly susceptible to faking. Past studies have shown that instructions to fake can distort responses to a personality inventory; however, validity scales have generally detected faking. Such studies have generally assumed that Ss were naive. When the effects of different faking sets with Ss of different degrees of sophistication were investigated using the Eysenck Personality Inventory the results indicate that Ss possessing even a minimum degree of sophistication can successfully fake on this inventory.

Personality inventories, unlike achievement or ability tests, have no concept of maximum effort or correct-vs-incorrect response as a basic assumption of the instrument. For this reason, faking is an intrinsic problem for personality inventories. Past studies have investigated a variety of faking sets, including faking "good" or "bad," faking oriented towards a goal, such as an occupational stereotype, e.g., fake "salesman," or faking intended to determine a person's values with respect to certain personality traits, e.g., fake "ideal self." The usual purpose has been to determine the degree to which such inventories could be successfully faked, and how such faking could be detected and controlled. A number of inventories include validity scales to detect faking, both intentional and unintentional. Examples of such include the Lie, Frequency, and Correction scales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hathaway & McKinley, 1942), Good Impression and the Communality scales of the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1956-1960), and the Lie scale of the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1963).

Research has typically indicated that personality inventories can be faked but that the validity scales will detect such faking. The inherent assumption in such research is that Ss are naive; effects of sophistication on faking have largely been ignored. The present study assessed not only the effect of different faking sets but also of different levels of sophistication on the Eysenck Personality Inventory. This inventory has acceptable psychometric properties, measures two well-defined dimensions of personality, Extraversion and Neuroticism, and includes a fairly typical validity scale, the Lie Scale. Star (1962), Braun and Gomez (1966), and Gomez and Braun (1967) have employed this inventory in studies using different faking instructions. The results have generally led the researchers to conclude that "... although faking instructions can alter scores on the EPI, the Lie scale detects faking rather effectively" (Braun & Gomez, 1966). This conclusion, however, is restricted to naive Ss.

Ss were university students involved in lower division undergraduate psychology courses. Four different types of faking sets were studied: (1) control (no faking instructions), (2) fake salesman, (3) fake librarian, and (4) fake ideal-self. Three levels of sophistication included (1) control, (2) minimum sophistication, and (3) reasonable sophistication. Ss in the minimum sophistication group were told only that the inventory would yield three scales and the scales were named. Ss with a reasonable level of sophistication were also presented with one item from each scale as an example. (Form A of the inventory was employed; the examplars were taken from Form B.)

The intended analysis was a multivariate analysis of variance. However, because of the independence of the three scales, the multivariate analysis of variance degenerated to three univariate analyses of variance (one for each scale). Factor A, faking, yielded significant differences ( $p < .001$ ) for all three scales (see Table 1). Factor B, sophistication, yielded a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) only for the Lie scale. A significant ( $p < .001$ ) interaction occurred for

TABLE 1  
F VALUES FROM UNIVARIATE TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Factor	df	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Lie
Instructions to Faking	3,193	105.81*	37.94*	17.04*
Sophistication	2,193	.28	2.63	42.15*
A $\times$ B	6,193	1.16	.67	4.00*

\* $p < .001$ .

the Lie scale. Examination of the means in Table 2 may assist interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Naive Ss manifested the pattern of results previously reported. Scores on Extraversion and Neuroticism were altered but the Lie scale scores also increased. With the introduction of a minimum of sophistication, the Extraversion and Neuroticism scales showed the same relative change but the Lie scale did not detect change most of the time. When examples of the items were presented, the faking continued successfully and the average score for the Lie scale dropped even lower, indicating that the faking is now essentially undetectable.

These results indicate that even with minimum sophistication the validity scales do not detect faking. Given the availability of books such as Alex's (1965) and the increasing sophistication of the general public with regard to psychology, the assumption that all Ss are naive has questionable validity, particularly when it is advantageous to S to present a distorted image. Validity scales apparently are only successful in detecting faking if Ss are unaware of the scales' existence. This

<sup>1</sup>While one might also examine the within-group intercorrelations between scores on the Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Lie Scales, the resulting nonsignificant values for the data reported here are based on small *ns* of 14 to 22, and the variability for some variables is quite limited. For these reasons, the values are not presented.

TABLE 2  
MEANS  $\pm$  STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Factor		Sample Size	Variable		
A*	B†		Extra-version	Neuroticism	Lie
1	1	14	12.8 $\pm$ 2.6	10.3 $\pm$ 4.1	1.7 $\pm$ 1.6
1	2	16	13.6 $\pm$ 4.2	10.3 $\pm$ 5.0	1.3 $\pm$ 1.2
1	3	12	14.9 $\pm$ 3.8	8.7 $\pm$ 4.7	1.3 $\pm$ 1.2
2	1	20	14.0 $\pm$ 4.4	3.4 $\pm$ 3.1	5.9 $\pm$ 2.6
2	2	20	14.8 $\pm$ 5.0	3.0 $\pm$ 3.1	3.6 $\pm$ 2.8
2	3	17	14.4 $\pm$ 4.3	2.6 $\pm$ 2.6	3.4 $\pm$ 2.9
3	1	15	18.1 $\pm$ 1.8	2.5 $\pm$ 1.4	6.3 $\pm$ 1.8
3	2	19	16.2 $\pm$ 2.3	5.1 $\pm$ 3.0	2.5 $\pm$ 2.5
3	3	16	16.1 $\pm$ 2.3	2.8 $\pm$ 1.9	1.6 $\pm$ 2.2
4	1	18	3.8 $\pm$ 3.3	3.8 $\pm$ 2.9	6.8 $\pm$ 1.6
4	2	22	5.4 $\pm$ 4.2	4.5 $\pm$ 4.0	3.5 $\pm$ 2.3
4	3	16	5.3 $\pm$ 4.3	3.3 $\pm$ 4.0	1.6 $\pm$ 1.5

\*Faking. †Sophistication.

evidence supports the contention that structured personality inventories offer an efficient and objective means for obtaining information about a person, but only if that person is willing honestly and accurately to provide such information.

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