

# SHORT, HOMOGENEOUS VERSIONS OF THE MARLOW-CROWNE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALE\*

ROBERT STRAHAN  
*University of Rochester*

AND

KATHLEEN CARRESE GERBASI  
*Washington University, St. Louis*

## PROBLEM

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS) has had considerable use in the decade since its publication.<sup>1</sup> Some data show, however, that several of its items contribute relatively little to the overall measure. This finding, together with a desire for shorter scales more useful in some research contexts, has led to construction of three homogeneous, short-form measures whose psychometric adequacy, in part, is supported by cross-validation.

## METHOD

Approximately 500 university students in two classes of an introductory psychology course were given packets of questionnaires to complete outside of class. Return of these anonymously filled-in materials provided credit toward a research participation requirement. One of the questionnaires was composed of the 33 M-C SDS items intermixed with 40 others to form extraversion-introversion and neuroticism scales. Three hundred and sixty-one students, 176 males and 185 females, returned usable questionnaires (a dozen or so others were discarded, for incompleteness or other reasons).

A principal components analysis was performed on the M-C SDS items, with sex and class as additional dichotomous variables; correlations were phi coefficients. Size of loading on the first principal component was the primary criterion for selection of items to form two 10-item social desirability scales [M-C 1(10) and M-C 2(10)] and, through their combination, a 20-item measure [M-C (20)]. (This criterion yielded results very like those based on item-total scale correlations.) A second requirement was that each scale have equal numbers of positively- and negatively-keyed items (in the M-C SDS, 18 items are keyed true, 15 false) as a control for possible acquiescence set. Two other criteria proved superfluous: items with badly imbalanced true-false splits and items with content judged somewhat inappropriate for college student Ss (e.g., "I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car") were excluded on grounds of low component loadings.

Separate consideration of sexes appeared unnecessary. The sex variable loaded very little ( $-.04$ , females higher) on the first component, and parallel analyses for the sexes showed quite similar patterns. The correlation between corresponding (absolute) item loadings for males and females was  $.85$ , which speaks to the reliability of the overall analysis as well as to the congruence of the sexes. The class variable, as expected, exhibited a trivial first component loading ( $-.11$ ).

## RESULTS

The first component accounted for about 13% of the total variance, not a large amount, but somewhat more than double that of the next largest, second component. All the M-C SDS items loaded in the appropriate directions on this first, general dimension, though 12 had absolute values less than  $.30$ . The range of absolute loadings for all items was  $.11$  to  $.54$ , with a mean of  $.35$ ; the range of loadings for the 20 selected items was  $.28$  to  $.54$ , with a mean of  $.42$ .

Items that form the new scales are given in Table 1, with direction of keying noted and with item numbers those of the original Crowne-Marlowe paper.

Four samples not in the components analysis were used to derive Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (K-R 20) reliability coefficients for the three new scales and the original M-C SDS. From Table 2, it is seen that M-C (20) had values close to

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TABLE 1. ITEMS THAT FORM THE NEW SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALES

## M-C 1(10)

16. (T) I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.  
 17. (T) I always try to practice what I preach.  
 25. (T) I never resent being asked to return a favor.  
 26. (T) I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.  
 33. (T) I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.  
 11. (F) I like to gossip at times.  
 15. (F) There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.  
 19. (F) I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.  
 22. (F) At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.  
 23. (F) There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

## M-C 2(10)

2. (T) I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.  
 4. (T) I have never intensely disliked anyone.  
 20. (T) When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.  
 21. (T) I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.  
 24. (T) I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong doings.  
 6. (F) I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.  
 12. (F) There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.  
 14. (F) I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.  
 28. (F) There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.  
 30. (F) I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.

those of M-C SDS and that the shorter M-C 1(10) and M-C 2(10) were about equal in reliability, with a suggestion perhaps that M-C 1(10) was slightly superior. Correlations between the two 10-item forms for the four samples as ordered in Table 2 were, respectively, .55, .75, .67 and .67. Correlations between each of these short scales and the (subsuming) M-C SDS were in the .80s or .90s, and correlations between M-C (20) and M-C SDS were all in the .90s.

Generality of the new scales' reliability is supported by the finding of fairly similar coefficients across samples diverse in subject composition and conditions of questionnaire administration. The two University samples were from the same source as that sample on which the components analysis was based, a private, academically select university. The College Females sample was drawn from a Catholic liberal-arts college for women, and the British Males sample was a rather heterogeneous mixture of students and non-students from London. For the first

TABLE 2. K-R 20 RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

	University Males N = 64	University Females N = 34	College Females N = 130	British Males N = 44
M-C 1(10)	.70	.66	.61	.59
M-C 2(10)	.62	.75	.49	.62
M-C (20)	.78	.83	.73	.77
M-C SDS	.83	.87	.73	.78

three samples, the M-C SDS items were embedded with items that form other scales and the questionnaires were administered anonymously under group conditions. The British Ss individually received questionnaires composed only of M-C SDS items and signed their names to those questionnaires.

Distributions for the scales were all essentially unimodal and nearly symmetric, with each mean near the middle of the possible range of scores. As an overall indication of scale means and standard deviations, averages were calculated across the four cross-validation samples, each average weighted according to sample size. For M-C 1(10), M-C 2(10), M-C (20) and M-C SDS respectively, average means were 4.5, 4.6, 9.1 and 14.5; average sample standard deviations (square roots of averaged variances) were 2.1, 2.1, 3.9 and 5.4.

Within each sample, tests of (correlated) means and variances were performed between M-C 1(10) and M-C 2(10). No significant difference was found for the variances; one significant mean difference was obtained [M-C 2(10) higher for the College Females,  $.05 < p < .02$ ], but M-C 1(10) had the higher mean in half the samples, M-C 2(10) the higher in the other half. Thus, the two 10-item scales seem at least roughly parallel.

### SUMMARY

Internal analysis of the M-C SDS led to construction of three homogeneous short-form versions. M-C (20) appears nearly as internally consistent as the half-again-as-long original measure and therefore might be preferred in many test situations. The still shorter and reasonably parallel M-C 1(10) and M-C 2(10) are of use when administration time is highly limited and the attendant drop in reliability tolerable.

### REFERENCE

1. CROWNE, D. P. and MARLOWE, D. A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *J. consult. Psychol.*, 1960, 24, 349-354.

## FAKING ON THE ZUNG SELF-RATING DEPRESSION SCALE: A REPLICATION AND REFINEMENT\*

BLAIR R. SWANSON AND CRAIG W. ANDERSON

*Brigham Young University*

### PROBLEM

The Zung<sup>(2)</sup> Self-rating Depression Scale (SDS) is a brief and relatively simple test developed to evaluate the syndrome of depression. The higher the score, the greater the depression. Scores have not been found to be significantly correlated to age, sex, intelligence, marital status, financial status, or educational level.<sup>(1)</sup> Several studies<sup>(4)</sup> have verified the reliability of the scale by comparison with other depression inventories. In attempts to determine the fakability of the SDS, Mikesell and Calhoun<sup>(1)</sup> administered the test to three groups of students. Results of the fake-bad group were significantly different ( $p < .01$ ) from those of the other two—fake-good and control. The fake-good group was not found to differ significantly from the control group; however, the Ss were not told what it was they were asked to fake. The purpose of this study, then, was to discover whether faking increases when Ss are informed as to the purpose of the test.

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