

CHOICE OF SITUATIONS AND CONGRUENCE MODELS OF INTERACTIONISM

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Summary—Recent studies of person–situation interactions have focused nearly exclusively on the statistical rather than reciprocal form of the concept. In an attempt to reverse this trend, two models of reciprocal interactionism are offered: choice of situations and congruence response models. The choice model proposes that individuals select situations and avoid others on the basis of certain underlying needs and dispositions. According to the congruence model, individuals should experience greater positive affect and less negative affect in situations which are congruent with their personality characteristics. Individuals indicated the frequency with which they had recently participated in various recreation situations and also reported the affects they felt when in those situations. Some support was found for both models of interactionism, thus the choice of model appeared stronger. Implications of the choice model for the personality consistency issue and personality assessment are discussed, and suggestions for future research are offered.

INTRODUCTION

Although interactional studies of personality have been proliferating in recent years, there remains widespread differences in the meaning and the usage of the term ‘interactionism’. One usage is the statistical or additive model (Endler, 1983). This form of interactionism is typically studied in analysis of variance designs, in which the variance in the dependent variable is partitioned into sources associated with persons, situations and their interactions. Both situations and persons are implicitly assumed to have a unidirectional influence on responses. A recent review of these studies can be found in Furnham and Jaspars (1983). Both Furnham and Jaspars (1983) and Olweus (1977) conclude that these S–R studies “have brought about as much confusion as clarity” (Furnham and Jaspars, 1983 p. 643; Olweus, 1977, p. 224).

The second usage of the term refers to a reciprocal, dynamic, transactional or organismic interactionism (Endler, 1983; Overton and Reese, 1973; Pervin, 1968). Situations and persons are at the same time both independent and dependent variables, and there is bidirectional causality between the two.

A number of criticisms, both theoretical and methodological, have been directed at the statistical form of interactionism (Cronbach, 1975; Endler, 1983; Golding, 1975; Kenrick and Dantchik, 1983). Unfortunately, it is the statistical form of interactionism which has turned out to be more popular for empirical investigation. This is presumably due to the relative ease with which the persons and situations can be entered into a 2×2 factorial design. Endler (1983) observes that we have not yet developed the technology for the study of reciprocal interactionism; this should be high on the priority list for researchers.

Although the statistical form of interactionism does have its uses (e.g. if the interest is in prediction rather than understanding), it is the reciprocal form which will be focused on in the remainder of this paper. Furthermore, it is the reciprocal form of interactionism which the classical interactional theorists of personality (Angyal, Kantor, Lewin and Murray) advocated.

Choosing Situations as Interactionism

What are the processes through which individuals find themselves in certain situations? Certainly the manner by which people encounter the majority of the situations in their lives is not randomly determined. Since only those situations in which people spend their time can influence their behavior, it is necessary to understand why people select certain situations and avoid others. Personologists since the time of Allport have defended the notion that individuals actively seek out situations which are compatible with their personalities and avoid others which are incompatible.

Wachtel (1973) has noted that many experimental studies of personality are artificial because the stimuli (situations) are determined by the experimenter, rather than being chosen by the individual, which is what often occurs in everyday life. A similar view has been expressed by Singer (1983) in noting that personality is a determinant of many situations in which persons find themselves.

Also adhering to similar positions are Plomin, DeFries and Loehlin (1977), Mischel (1977), Kenrick and Dantchik (1983), and Argyle (1977). Plomin *et al.* refer to this form of interactionism as an 'active genotype-environment correlation'. These types of correlations are said to occur when individuals seek environments which correspond to their genetic predispositions. Mischel (1977) points out that individuals continuously select, change and generate conditions just as much as being affected by them, in a mutually interactive manner. In the same vein, he states that "some of the most striking differences between persons may be found not by studying their responses to the same situation but by analyzing their selection and construction of stimulus conditions" (p. 248). Kenrick and Dantchik (1983) also note that "the individual selects environments to play out his or her personal characteristics" (p. 293). Argyle (1977) observes that "the systematic analysis of range of situations chosen is potentially a most interesting aspect of individual differences" (p. 366).

There has been empirical evidence to support these claims. Several investigators have examined the relationship between specific personality traits and situation selection (Christie and Geis, 1970; Furnham, 1981, 1982; Gormly, 1982; Mehrabian, 1978; Snyder, 1981, 1983; Zuckerman, 1979). These studies have demonstrated that individuals to seek out and also avoid situations which are reflective of their personalities.

The most lucid and well-specific formulation of the choice of situation model has been proposed by Snyder. Snyder and his colleagues (Snyder, 1981, 1983; Snyder and Gangestad, 1982; Snyder and Kendzierski, 1982) have sought to understand the processes by which individuals actively choose to put themselves in some social situations and avoid others, and the consequences of these choices. Snyder has proposed that the process of choosing situations reflects basic features of one's personal identity, including one's conception of self, one's beliefs and attitudes and one's characteristic dispositions.

A recent investigation by Diener, Larsen and Emmons (1984) looked at the relationship between several personality dispositions and time spent in various activities subsumed under superordinate categories (e.g. work-recreation, social-alone). Results indicated partial support of the hypotheses; for example, extraversion correlated with time spent recreating socially and need for order was negatively related to time spent in novel situations. However there were also counterintuitive findings, such as need for affiliation correlating negatively with time spent in social situations. One possible explanation for their equivocal results is that the situation categories employed may have been too broad for personality variables to predict choice behavior. The superordinate categories of 'social' and 'work' may be too broad and do not indicate what are the relevant environmental characteristics, since there are many types of social and work situations. It may be that various personality types respond differently to different aspects of what may appear to be the same situation. For example, extraverts may prefer arousing social situations while individuals high in need for affiliation may prefer to spend quieter times with a few close friends.

The Congruence Model of Interactionism

Another model of interactionism which has received some research attention has been that of person-situation 'fit' or 'congruence'. The usual procedure here is to determine what are the major person characteristics believed to interact with relevant environment characteristics, and then to determine the 'fit' or 'match' between the person and the environment. The assumption is, the better the fit, the more favorable the consequences or outcome for the person. Outcome has been measured in a number of ways, such as in performance (Pervin, 1968), adjustment (French, Rodgers and Cobb, 1974; Kahana, 1978), satisfaction (Pervin, 1968; Kahana, 1978) and positive and negative affect (Diener *et al.*, 1984). The Diener *et al.* (1984) study on naturalistic situation selection incorporated measures of affect in order to test the congruence model. Personality variables were correlated separately with positive and negative affect within different situational classes (social, alone, work, recreation, novel, typical). While some of the findings were predicted (e.g. autonomy correlated negatively with positive affect in social situations), others were contrary

to prediction. For example, need for affiliation correlated with positive affect in alone situations, and negatively with positive affect in social situations. The magnitude of all of the correlations was small, leading the authors to conclude that the model was not strongly supported by the data. As was pointed out earlier, the situational categories used may have been too broad in order to isolate the relevant situational characteristics.

How is the congruence model a form of reciprocal interactionism? The basic tenet of reciprocal interactionism is that people influence situations, and situations influence people. People influence situations by choosing some and avoiding others, thus having a say in which situations will influence their behavior. Affect experienced in the situation will partially determine future decisions to enter or avoid that situation (Emmons, Diener and Larsen, 1984). Thus, to the extent that individuals experience affect which is compatible with their psychological predispositions, the probability of choosing that situation again in the future will be increased.

The primary purpose of the present study is to extend the applicability of the two models of interactionism: choice of situations and congruence response. Instead of focusing on global situations, the present study examines specific recreation and work situations or activities. Monson, Hesley and Chernick (1982) have demonstrated that the effects of personality on behavior are likely to be greatest when situations are less restrictive in terms of the possible behaviors which may be exhibited. In a similar vein, it is proposed here that the process of choosing among a wide variety of specific situations is also likely to be reflective of one's personality.

METHOD

Subjects

All *Ss* were University of Illinois undergraduates. Eighty-seven (30 males, 57 females) were enrolled in Introductory Psychology, and were participating in order to partially fulfill the course requirements. Another 22 *Ss* (3 males, 19 females) were enrolled in a semester-long independent study course.

Materials

Recreation Activity Questionnaire (RAQ)

A questionnaire was constructed which consists of 36 recreation activities. Twenty of the activities were taken from a list of situations generated by the 22 *Ss* in the independent study course. The remaining 16 were culled from lists used by Howard (1976) and Allen (1982). The activities reflected both commonly occurring ones throughout the school year (talk to friends on phone, play video games) as well as seasonal activities (sunbathing, boating/sailing). *Ss* were asked to indicate the frequency with which they had participated in each activity in the past month, on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (several times). For the seasonal activities, *Ss* were asked to indicate how often in a typical month in the season for that activity do they participate in it. *Ss* were also asked to keep records of how many social and sports events they attended over a 2-week period, and also to estimate what percentage of time they spent working (including studying) and what percentage of the time they spent recreating during those 2 weeks. Finally, *Ss* were asked where they studied (library, union, room or apartment) and if they studied alone or with someone during those 2 weeks.

Personality measures

In deciding which personality variables to include, there were two primary considerations. First was that the dimensions ought to be theoretically relevant to the prediction of choice of situations. Second, variables had to be embedded in an acceptable theoretical foundation. Thus an effort was made to avoid the practice of administering a multidimensional inventory, in which perhaps only one or two scales are relevant to the criterion. Using these criteria, the following scales were employed:

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ: Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975), based on Eysenck's theory of personality, yields four scores: Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Lie (social desirability).

The EASI-III Survey (Buss and Plomin, 1975), based on Buss and Plomin's temperament theory, yields four main scores: Emotionality, Activity, Sociability and Impulsivity.

The Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS Form IV, Zuckerman, 1979) yields five scores: General, Thrill and Adventure Seeking, Experience Seeking, Boredom Susceptibility and Disinhibition.

The Personality Research Form (PRF, Form E; Jackson, 1974), from which seven scales were used: Achievement, Affiliation, Autonomy, Dominance, Exhibitionism, Harmavoidance and Play.

The Marlowe-Crowne Need for Approval Index (Crowne and Marlowe, 1964).

It was thought that this selection of variables would be wide enough to be predictive of the choosing of situations, without sacrificing parsimony. All items were examined in order to avoid common items appearing on both the personality scales and the RAQ. This resulted in the elimination of 1 item from the EPQ, 7 from the PRF and 4 from the SSS.

In order to test the congruence model, *Ss* were asked to indicate how likely they are to feel each of six different affects when participating in each of the 36 activities. *Ss* also kept records of their affect while working and studying in the different locations. The six affect words were: happy, bored, enjoyment/fun, frustrated, interested/involved and unhappy. Half are positive and half are negative, two are broad and four are more specific. They are all relevant to the feelings one is likely to have when participating in various activities. The affect ratings were made on a 7-point scale, where 1 = not at all likely to feel the emotion and 7 = very likely to feel the emotion. In this study, happy, enjoyment/fun and interested/involved were summed to provide a composite Positive Affect score, and unhappy, bored and frustrated were summed to provide a composite Negative Affect score. The usefulness of these concepts as measures of affect has been demonstrated in our other work (Diener and Emmons, 1984). These composite affect scales have α and temporal stability coefficients which approach 0.90. It has been demonstrated that positive and negative affect are independent in people's lives over long periods of time (Diener and Emmons, 1984). Since the concern here is with the average affect which is felt in different situations over time, positive and negative affect are measured and analyzed separately.

Procedure

The 87 Introductory Psychology students were tested in a group setting. The other 22 *Ss* were given the materials in a packet and returned them the following week. Questionnaires were administered in counterbalanced order, with half of the *Ss* receiving and RAQ first and the other half receiving the personality questionnaires first. Subsequent analysis revealed no significant effects of sequencing. The questionnaires took approx. 2 hr to complete. Following completion of the questionnaires, the Introductory Psychology students were given a written debriefing while the smaller sample was debriefed orally at the end of the semester.

RESULTS

Because of the large number of both personality and recreation variables, it was believed that multivariate analyses would be the most appropriate way to proceed. However this could also serve to mask certain bivariate relationships, so certain of these will also be presented. The initial step was to factor analyze responses to the 36 RAQ items. The correlation matrix was subjected to a principal-axes factor analysis. The number of factors to be extracted was determined by inspection of the scree plot of eigenvalues. Using this criterion, six factors emerged, which were rotated orthogonally. The six factors accounted for 78% of the variance. The items and their respective factor loadings are presented in Table 1. Only items loading 0.40 or higher were included in the factor. The factors were: *Factor 1*, 10 items, Sorority/Social; *Factor 2*; 6 items, Outdoor/Active; *Factor 3*, 5 items, Team Sports; *Factor 4*, 6 items, Aesthetic/Cultural; *Factor 5*; 7 items, Arousal Seeking; *Factor 6*; 5 items, Alone/Intimate. These factors bear resemblance to those uncovered in other leisure research (cf. Howard, 1976).

Table 1. Factor loadings of RAQ items

Item	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Going shopping	0.74	0.06	-0.08	-0.39	0.33	0.18
Singing/dancing	0.67	0.06	-0.09	-0.11	0.19	0.19
Talk to friends on phone	0.64	0.13	0.09	-0.16	-0.01	0.03
Sunbathing	0.53	0.39	-0.17	-0.17	0.20	0.20
Leisure reading	0.52	-0.09	0.06	0.40	0.09	-0.02
Entertain friends at home	0.47	-0.02	0.19	-0.06	-0.07	0.10
Visiting friends	0.43	0.15	0.27	-0.01	0.15	0.07
Swimming	0.42	0.64	-0.04	0.21	0.28	0.21
Writing letters	0.42	0.11	-0.05	0.17	0.10	-0.02
Being at a party	0.41	0.03	0.06	-0.51	0.57	0.20
Sailing/boating	0.08	0.67	0.06	0.25	0.50	-0.12
Skiing—water or snow	-0.09	0.64	0.23	0.06	0.59	0.06
Hiking/camping	-0.14	0.58	0.35	0.29	0.01	0.12
Golf	-0.28	0.56	0.20	0.07	0.20	0.14
Bicycle riding	0.26	0.55	0.01	0.39	-0.09	0.07
Going to movies	0.01	0.47	0.07	-0.05	0.03	0.16
Attend sports events	0.18	0.42	0.44	-0.14	-0.09	0.13
Play tennis/raquetball	0.39	0.40	0.27	-0.01	0.35	-0.08
Play baseball/softball	-0.09	0.18	0.71	0.07	0.04	-0.24
Play indoor team sports	-0.13	0.03	0.68	-0.08	-0.12	0.04
Playing video games	0.06	-0.07	0.59	-0.37	-0.01	-0.22
Watch television	0.24	0.10	0.42	-0.35	0.09	0.13
Going to museum/gallery	0.14	0.09	-0.01	0.67	0.11	0.09
Painting/drawing/crafts	0.12	-0.01	-0.01	0.60	0.12	-0.05
Play musical instrument	0.35	0.13	-0.07	0.47	-0.26	0.10
Exercising or working out	-0.18	0.00	0.21	-0.40	-0.14	0.46
Attending rock concerts	0.22	0.33	-0.22	-0.04	0.72	-0.01
Go to a bar with friends	0.11	0.05	0.05	-0.35	0.54	0.22
Listening to stereo	0.18	-0.07	0.09	0.06	0.42	0.16
Spending time alone	0.25	0.07	-0.10	0.04	-0.40	0.40
Alone with boy/girlfriend	0.21	0.21	0.04	-0.02	-0.07	0.72
Going on a date	0.25	0.34	0.02	-0.07	0.13	0.63
Jogging	-0.07	0.26	-0.20	0.10	-0.02	0.58

N = 109. Factor 1 = Sorority/Social; Factor 2 = Outdoor/Active; Factor 3 = Media/Sports; Factor 4 = Aesthetic/Cultural; Factor 5 = Arousal Seeking; Factor 6 = Alone/Intimate.

Given these factors, it was predicted that: extraversion, sociability and need for affiliation would be related to time spent in sorority/social activities, vigor to time spent in outdoor/active activities, and impulsivity and some of the SSS subscales to arousal-seeking activities. For the congruence model, it was predicted that extraversion, sociability and need for affiliation would correlate positively with positive affect in the sorority/social activities and negatively with negative affect in the same activities. Activity should correlate with positive affect in outdoor/active situations, and impulsivity, extraversion and the sensation-seeking traits should be positively associated with positive affect within the arousal-seeking situations.

Choice of Recreation Situations

Factor scores for each recreation factor were created by summing the items which loaded 0.40 or higher on that factor. The correlations between the personality variables and the frequency of participation in the various recreation situations are shown in Table 2. It can be seen that there are several significant correlations between the personality variables and the recreation factors. Extraversion is correlated with four out of the six factors, all except Team Sports and Aesthetic/Cultural. This is an interesting finding because one extraversion item from the EPQ is "I have any different hobbies." Sociability and need for affiliation show a similar pattern, both correlating positively with the Sorority/Social and Arousal Seeking factors. Need for play is positively associated with three out of the six factors. Need for achievement is the only variable which is positively related to the Aesthetic/Cultural factor, suggesting that these activities are tasks which allow for self-improvement and accomplishment. At the bottom of Table 2 are the squared multiple correlations for predicting activity participation from the personality variables. It can be seen that the arousal-seeking activities were best predicted ($R^2 \pm 0.56$), while participation in team sports was the most poorly predicted, but even so the variable still accounted for 32% of the variance in these activities. Bivariate analyses also revealed some interesting relationships: for example, dominance with leisure driving (0.26), attending sports events (0.30) and going to movies

Table 2. Correlations between personality variables and frequency of participation in recreation activities

Personality variable	Recreation activity factors					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extraversion	0.35	0.34	0.11	-0.19	0.36	0.30
Activity	0.09	0.34	0.22	-0.10	0.09	0.11
Sociability	0.34	0.26	0.08	-0.24	0.43	0.22
Impulsivity	0.05	0.11	0.08	-0.17	0.31	0.17
Thrill and adventure seeking	0.12	0.26	-0.02	-0.02	0.12	0.03
Disinhibition	0.12	0.05	0.05	-0.39	0.51	0.21
Achievement	-0.13	0.09	-0.05	0.29	-0.22	-0.11
Affiliation	0.28	0.16	0.12	-0.19	0.42	-0.08
Autonomy	-0.22	-0.04	0.03	0.19	-0.20	-0.09
Dominance	0.15	0.23	0.18	0.01	0.14	0.14
Exhibitionism	0.25	0.26	0.19	-0.15	0.42	0.11
Harm avoidance	0.04	-0.25	-0.21	0.01	-0.06	-0.01
Play	0.41	0.02	0.04	-0.33	0.40	0.11
Multiple R	0.49	0.40	0.32	0.52	0.56	0.51

For $N = 109$, correlations of 0.18 are significant at the 0.05 level and those of 0.24 at the 0.01 level. Only those personality variables that correlated significantly with at least one recreation factor are shown.

(0.42); exhibitionism with skiing (0.35); neuroticism with hiking/camping (-0.28); and need for achievement with going to parties (-0.26) and with going to bars (-0.34).

Table 3 shows the correlations between the personality variables and the additional situational choice measures of number of social and sports events attended during the 2-week estimated period and estimated percentage of time spent working and recreating during those 2 weeks. What is particularly striking to note here are the large correlations between several personality variables and the purely objective measure of number of social events. Four of the variables correlated 0.40 or higher with this measure. Personality variables were poor predictors of sporting event attendance, which is not surprising given the earlier finding that the Team Sports factor was also poorly predicted from the personality variables. It can also be seen in Table 3 that several of the personality variables were also strong predictors of the estimated percentage of time spent working and recreating. In terms of study location, extraverts preferred studying in the library ($r = 0.34$, $P < 0.01$) as opposed to studying at home ($r = -0.21$, $P < 0.05$). Also, need for affiliation correlated negatively with time spent studying at home ($r = -0.22$, $P < 0.05$), and need for achievement correlated positively with time spent studying at home ($r = 0.28$, $P < 0.05$).

In summary, there appear to be several interesting and significant relationships between the choosing of recreation situations and one's psychological propensities. Out of the 200 correlation coefficients computed, 74 (37%) were statistically significant beyond the 0.05 level, a number of considerable above chance. People appear to seek out situations in the form of recreation activities and study locations which are compatible with their personalities. However, the magnitude of the correlations also suggests that personality is just one factor which influences the choice of these situations.

Table 3. Correlations between personality variables and additional recreation measures

Personality variable	Social	Sports	Work	Recreate
Psychoticism	-0.22	0.14	-0.33	0.41
Extraversion	0.44	0.10	-0.13	0.33
Lie	-0.28	-0.14	0.36	-0.45
Activity	0.23	0.42	-0.07	0.08
Sociability	0.48	0.14	-0.17	0.32
Impulsivity	0.44	0.13	-0.42	0.52
Disinhibition	0.39	0.18	-0.44	0.54
Boredom susceptibility	0.21	0.18	-0.22	0.30
Achievement	-0.27	0.27	0.47	-0.50
Affiliation	0.25	-0.01	0.01	0.07
Dominance	0.05	0.33	0.22	-0.07
Exhibitionism	0.30	-0.02	-0.13	0.34
Harm avoidance	-0.15	-0.20	0.26	-0.25
Play	0.41	-0.06	-0.41	0.47

Social = number of social events attended; sports = number of sports events attended; work = percentage of time spent working; recreate = percentage of time spent recreating. See the text for further explanation of these variables.

Congruence Model

In order to examine the congruence model of interactionism, positive and negative affect within each factor of recreation activities was correlated with each of the personality variables. The correlations between positive affect and personality within each activity factor are presented in Table 4. It can be seen that although most of the values are small, they seem to mirror the choice of situation data. That is, people report experiencing positive affect in activities in which they have frequently recently participated. For example, extraversion is correlated with positive affect within the Sorority/Social and Arousal Seeking factors and negatively with positive affect within the Aesthetic/Cultural factor. Sociability and need for affiliation show a similar pattern once again. It is interesting that need for achievement is not correlated significantly with positive affect within the Aesthetic/Cultural factor, although individuals with high need for achievement tend to choose these activities over others. Perhaps the activities do not lead to immediate happiness, but are chosen with some longer range goals in mind. Given in Table 5 are the correlations between negative affect and personality within the recreation factors. These values are also quite small, due mainly to the fact that most people are not unhappy when they are recreating, and that they do not choose activities which make them unhappy. Indeed, Diener *et al.* (1984) found that people were happiest when they were recreating. There are some interesting findings in Table 5. Neurotics tend to feel negative affect no matter what they are doing. The same holds true (except for aesthetic-cultural activities) for autonomous individuals. The values in Table 5 are basically symmetrically to those in Table 4, with only a few exceptions.

Finally, Table 6 gives the correlations between both positive and negative affect with personality within work and study situations. The congruence model appears somewhat stronger here. High need for achievers experience greater positive affect and less negative affect both when in class and when studying in the library. Those high in need for play feel less positive and more negative affect when in class. Not surprisingly, extraverts are happier studying in the library than studying at

Table 4. Correlations between personality variables and positive affect within each factor of recreation activities

Personality variable	Positive affect within factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Psychoticism	-0.13	0.02	0.07	-0.24	0.08	-0.02
Neuroticism	-0.16	-0.32	-0.17	-0.29	-0.19	-0.20
Extraversion	0.31	0.17	0.04	-0.23	0.37	0.22
Activity	0.08	0.20	0.03	-0.13	0.31	0.15
Sociability	0.36	0.17	0.07	-0.14	0.33	0.36
Impulsivity	0.10	0.10	0.07	-0.22	0.13	0.02
Thrill and adventure seeking	0.07	0.28	0.04	-0.17	0.05	0.22
Disinhibition	0.12	-0.03	0.08	-0.25	0.37	0.05
Affiliation	0.38	0.10	0.15	-0.05	0.38	0.15
Autonomy	-0.10	-0.05	-0.01	0.27	-0.12	-0.19
Exhibitionism	0.32	0.17	0.11	-0.25	0.35	0.19
Harm avoidance	0.11	-0.21	-0.07	0.14	-0.05	-0.03
Play	0.37	0.04	0.07	-0.18	0.27	0.08

Table 5. Correlations between personality variables and negative affect within each factor of recreation activities

Personality variable	Negative affect within factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Psychoticism	0.15	0.02	0.03	0.18	-0.01	0.23
Neuroticism	0.16	0.23	0.15	0.24	0.19	0.14
Extraversion	-0.25	-0.13	-0.02	0.21	-0.19	-0.14
Activity	-0.10	-0.11	0.12	0.08	-0.15	-0.15
Sociability	-0.30	-0.06	0.01	0.16	-0.26	-0.09
Impulsivity	0.00	0.03	0.05	0.19	-0.04	0.20
Thrill and adventure seeking	0.04	-0.14	0.00	0.18	0.03	-0.05
Disinhibition	-0.12	-0.06	-0.06	0.14	-0.22	-0.03
Achievement	0.00	-0.16	-0.16	-0.14	0.00	-0.21
Affiliation	-0.20	0.00	-0.08	0.07	-0.22	0.01
Autonomy	0.24	0.22	0.18	-0.07	0.23	0.33
Dominance	-0.16	-0.01	0.03	0.13	-0.15	-0.10
Exhibitionism	-0.23	-0.09	0.08	0.25	-0.26	-0.09
Harm avoidance	-0.15	0.15	0.01	-0.08	0.00	-0.09
Play	-0.35	-0.07	-0.04	0.09	-0.23	0.00

Table 6. Correlations between personality variables and affect within study and work situations

Personality variables	In class		Personality variables	Study in library			Study in room or apartment	
	+ ve	- ve		+ ve	- ve		+ ve	- ve
Psychoticism	-0.16	0.31	Extraversion	0.33	-0.04	Extraversion	-0.12	0.29
Lie	0.27	-0.42	Activity	0.43	-0.18	Impulsivity	-0.29	0.27
Activity	0.33	-0.18	Sociability	0.30	-0.08	General sensation seeking	-0.21	0.28
Impulsivity	-0.22	0.24	Achievement	0.19	-0.27	Thrill and adventure seeking	-0.41	0.28
Achievement	0.36	-0.29	Affiliation	0.27	-0.11	Experience Seeking	-0.21	0.28
Dominance	0.31	0.10	Dominance	0.12	0.26	Dominance	0.21	0.16
Play	-0.26	0.19	Exhibitionism	0.29	0.09	Exhibitionism	-0.02	0.28
						Harm avoidance	0.29	-0.25

+ ve = Positive affect; - ve = negative affect.

home, and several of the other social traits (e.g. sociability, affiliation, exhibitionism) are related to positive affect when studying in the library. Individuals high in the 'stimulus-seeking' traits (e.g. impulsivity, thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking) are unhappy when studying at home.

DISCUSSION

Taken as a whole, the results of this study provide some support for both the choice of situation model of interactionism and the congruence model of interactionism. It was found that individuals to choose to spend time in certain activities or situations and avoid others on the basis of underlying personality traits, and that these relationships are theoretically predictable. The present study extends both Diener *et al.*'s (1984) two models of interactionism and prior research on the personality correlates of leisure activity preference. We examined choice of specific recreation situations and study settings, and included a wider variety of personality variables. Our models were grounded in theoretical considerations. We do recognize the limitations inherent in self-report data. Certainly there is always some distortion present in the recall of experiences and affect. However, Diener *et al.* (1984) showed that distortion in mood recall did not occur until time periods greater than 3 months were assessed. Since the present study dealt with time periods no greater than the past month, we are reasonably confident that the results in this study reflect actual choice rather than memory or consistency of self-presentational style. Even so, we believe that it is still desirable to supplement the present methodology by collecting 'on the spot' mood reports, such as those used in the Diener *et al.* study.

Implications of the Present Study

The findings reported in this study contain a number of important implications for the study of personality. First, it is clear, as Furnham (1981) pointed out, that studies of statistical interactionism underestimate the influence of personality. Person variables operate twice—before the situation, partly determining whether or not the individual will enter the situation, and during the situation, partly determining how the person will respond, behaviorally and effectively. Both the classical (e.g. Angyal) and the modern (e.g. Snyder) interactionists contend that the person and the situation cannot be separated as independent factors, since people choose to interact in, and seek out specific situations and avoid others, and these choices reflect differences in personality. By this choice, individuals allow certain situations to influence their behavior, and simultaneously rule out the effect of other situations on their behavior.

Second, the choosing of situations has implications for the continuing behavioral (in)consistency controversy (Mischel and Peake, 1982). It is likely that the extent to which consistency or sameness of behavior across situations and over time occurs, is because the individual chooses similar situations for himself. The selection of congruent environments fosters and perpetuates long-term behavioral consistency and stability in the individual (Costa and McCrae, 1980).

These findings point to the possibility of assessing personality by assessing situational choice. Such an assessment strategy would have the added benefit of tying personality dispositions to actual situations in Ss' everyday lives, thus increasing the predictability of behavior from nomothetic trait measures. Furnham (1981) has suggested that assessing personality in this

unobtrusive fashion may be useful in certain circumstances, such as in the psychohistorical study of deceased individuals, or as a self-monitoring technique used in behavioral therapy.

Recently, McClelland (1980, 1981) has praised the merits of operant (e.g. TAT responses as motive measures) as opposed to respondent (objective self-report questionnaires) measures of behavior. According to McClelland, motives are important in that they drive, direct and select behavior. Seen in this light, the choosing of situations can be viewed as an operant action response, as it has been shown that individuals select out certain situations based on underlying needs and motives. Furthermore, operant behaviors show more consistency across time and over situations because they are less dependent on specific stimulus conditions (McClelland, 1981). Given the advantages of operant measures of behavior in predicting life outcomes, it follows that the choosing of situations can prove to be an excellent assessment device. McClelland remarks that "one of the greatest failures to my mind of contemporary personality measurement is that it seems almost totally to have failed to understand and utilize operant measures" (1981, p. 99). To those researchers who shy away from projective techniques, choice of situations is offered as an alternative operant measure.

Other Influences on Situational Choices

Since the affect congruence model did not receive strong support, the question remains, why do individuals choose to enter certain situations while avoiding others? Apparently it is not on the basis of the affect felt in the situation. People do select situations on the basis of their underlying personality dispositions, yet for the most part the affect which they feel does not appear to be based on congruence between aspects of the situation and themselves. It has been suggested (Diener *et al.*, 1984) that covert affect is less likely to be subject to reliable reinforcement than is overt behavior. Affect is more likely to be 'carried' from situation to situation, whereas behavior is more situation specific. Indeed, Diener and Larsen (1984) found greater cross-situational consistency for affective than for behavioral responses. Whereas often there are clear standards of behavioral appropriateness in situations, this is not often the case for affect.

A promising line of inquiry appears to be the goal structure of situations (Argyle, Furnham and Graham, 1981; Pervin, 1983). Argyle *et al.* argue that goal structure is a property of the situation rather than of persons. However, we believe that goals conceived of as properties of individuals can help in understanding individual differences in the selection of situations. Situations may be chosen on the basis of either short- or long-term goals of individuals. For example, a high need for achiever may study long hours in order to get high grades to be accepted into medical school. This may not lead to immediate happiness, thus this apparent congruence between the individual and situation does not immediately result in increased positive and decreased negative affect. Emmons *et al.* (1984) found that goal importance and goal attainment were both strong predictors of choosing to spend time in situations.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the claim is not being made that personality dispositions are the only determinant of situational choice and avoidance. Certainly there are other aspects of individuals in addition to needs and traits which also influence the selection of situations. Snyder (1983) has proposed that the choice of social settings and interpersonal contexts are guided by features of individuals such as self-conceptions, attitudes, dispositions and affective states. It is clear that in addition to needs and traits, there are other influences on situational choice which need to be fully explored in order to understand the processes by which individuals place themselves in varying situations.

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