An S-R inventory of dominance for research on the nature of person-situation interactions[1]

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ABSTRACT

The development and validation of an S-R inventory of dominance is described. The inventory was found to have high reliability, adequate convergent and discriminant validity, and a meaningful factor structure. In samples of 18 and 164 college students the interaction between persons and situations contributed more to total score variance than did either persons or situations taken separately. Moreover, the percentage of variance due to the person-situation interaction for dominance was found to be substantially larger than those obtained for other personality characteristics that have been studied with S-R inventories. These considerations suggest that this new S-R inventory is particularly appropriate for future research on dominance and the nature of person-situation interactions.

In the continuing controversy over the relative contributions of persons, situations, and their interaction in accounting for differences in behavior, the S-R inventory has come to play an increasingly important role. The S-R paradigm, introduced by Endler, Hunt, and Rosenstein (1962), examines the effects of both different situations and different modes of response on the expression of some personal characteristic. In the study of anxiety, for example, the subject rates the extent to which he manifests a variety of different modes of response (e.g., heart beats faster; perspires) in a variety of different situations (e.g., being alone in the woods

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at night; waiting in a dentist's office). From such data, the percentages of the variance due to the main effects for persons, situations, and modes of response, as well as the percentages of the variance due to the three two-way interactions, can be determined. (When subjects are administered such an inventory on only one occasion, as is typically the case, the three-way interaction variance is confounded with the error variance.)

Since Endler et al. (1962) first described their S-R Inventory of Anxiousness, several additional S-R inventories have been developed. Thus, the S-R format has been used in the study of hostility (Endler & Hunt, 1968), choice behavior (Sandell, 1968), interpersonal behavior (Lorr, Suziedelis, & Kinnane, 1969; Knudson & Golding, 1974), leisure activity (Bishop & Witt, 1970), anxiety (Ekehammar, Magnusson, & Ricklander, 1974; Zuckerman & Mellstrom, 1977), general trait anxiousness (Endler & Okada, 1975), and aggression (Golin & Hartz, Note 1). These studies have almost uniformly found that the percentages of variance accounted for by persons and by situations, taken separately, are not as large as that due to their interaction (Bowers, 1973). Apparently, neither enduring predispositions of the person, as traditional trait theorists (e.g., Allport, 1937) have argued, nor situations, as others (e.g., Mischel, 1968; Skinner, 1953) have suggested, represent the most important source of variance in behavior. Accordingly, several recent theoretical discussions have emphasized the importance of person-situation interactions in accounting for the variability in human behavior (Alker, 1972; Bowers, 1973; Ekehammar, 1974; Endler, 1973, 1975; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Magnusson, 1976; Mischel, 1977).

A recent comprehensive review of this literature (Ekehammar, 1974) concluded by suggesting that there is presently a "convergence of conceptions" within personality psychology toward "interactionism." If such a convergence of conceptions is occurring, it is premature, relying more on theoretical notions about the nature of personality than on appropriate empirical data. It has recently been recognized that the magnitudes of person-situation interaction components of variance are not informative with regard to the nature of these interactions (Endler, 1973, 1975; Golding, 1975; Mischel, 1973; Sarason, Smith, & Diener, 1975). Although research has shown that person-situation interactions are an important source of variance, it has not yet been demon-

strated that these interactions consist of replicable patterns from which meaningful predictions can be made (Golding, 1975; Mischel, 1973). Indeed, Bowers (1973) recognized that given currently available research, person-situation interaction variance can be reconciled with either the trait, situationist, or interactionist approaches to personality.

We constructed an S-R inventory of dominance for use in a twin study that explored the nature of these interactions by examining genetic and environmental influences on person-situation interactions for anxiety and dominance (Dworkin, Note 2). Dominance was chosen as one of the traits to be studied for several reasons. It is a well-researched personality trait, one which has been found to have significant genetic variance in both adolescence and adulthood (Dworkin, Burke, Maher, & Gottesman, 1976). Moreover, it is entirely interpersonal in nature, in contrast with most of the other traits and behaviors for which S-R inventories exist, where both social and nonsocial situations and modes of response are appropriate. We believed that because dominance is an entirely interpersonal trait, it would be valuable to examine it by means of the S-R inventory paradigm and compare the results obtained with previous S-R inventory research. The data we report in this paper are based on initial studies with this inventory, and indicate that the person-situation interaction component of variance for dominance is both very large and stable across sexes and samples. Such properties make this inventory very appropriate for further research on the nature of person-situation interactions.

Previous methods that have been used to study dominance include scales in personality inventories constructed by both empirical and theoretical strategies, for example, the California Psychological Inventory (Megargee, 1972) and the Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1967). Projective methods (e.g., Kimmitt, Klopfer, & Reed, 1965; Otis & McCandless, 1955; Winter, 1973) and behavior ratings in both experimental and naturalistic settings (e.g., Gellert, 1961; Kagan & Moss, 1962) have also been employed. These methods have typically not examined the effects of different situations on the expression of dominance. Inasmuch as recent research has emphasized the importance of the context in the study of dominance (e.g., see Megargee, 1972, for a review of his research on this issue), an S-R inventory of domi-

nance that includes situations and modes of response is a significant addition to the methods that are available for the assessment of dominance. Research with this inventory could advance our understanding of this important aspect of social behavior.

Method

Subjects and Procedure

The S-R Inventory of Dominance was pretested in a personality psychology course at Wellesley College. Eighteen students (15 females, 3 males) completed the inventory at the beginning of a class hour. The inventory was then administered to 164 undergraduate and graduate students at Harvard University (84 males, 80 females) together with Jackson's (1967) Personality Research Form, Form AA (PRF). These students were paid volunteers who were also administered other measures as part of an unrelated study.

Construction of the S-R Inventory of Dominance

The theoretical and empirical works of Maslow (1937) and Butt and Fiske (1968, 1969), existing personality scales of dominance, and the lists of situations and modes of response provided by Endler and Hunt (1968) and Lorr et al. (1969) were consulted in the construction of the S-R Inventory of Dominance. The format of the inventory is very similar to the format of the S-R Inventory of Anxiousness (Endler et al., 1962). The inventory consists of 13 pages, the first page having instructions and an illustrative situation and mode of response scale. On each of the next 12 pages, one of the situations is printed at the top (see Table 3 for situations), followed by the 11 modes of response underneath (see Table 4 for modes of response). Next to each mode of response is a 5-point Likert scale, with the extreme positions labelled "unlikely" and "likely." For seven mode of response scales, position 1 was labelled unlikely and position 5 was labelled likely; for the remaining four scales these labels were reversed.

Results

Reliabilities of the S-R Inventory of Dominance

The coefficient alpha estimates of reliability (Cronbach, 1951) for the S-R Inventory of Dominance situation scales, calculated from the Harvard sample data, were all in the .80s and .90s, except for situation 1 ($\alpha = .75$). For the mode of response scales, the alphas were all in the .70s and .80s, except for scales 1

($\alpha = .68$) and 2 ($\alpha = .66$). Alpha was .96 for the total score on the inventory. Evidently, the total score, the situation scale scores, and the mode of response scale scores of the S-R Inventory of Dominance are all of acceptable reliability.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Although the purpose of this study was not primarily validational, the correlations of the S-R Inventory of Dominance total score with the 22 PRF scales provide informative data regarding the convergent and discriminant validities of the total score. For the Harvard sample, the correlation of the S-R inventory total score with the PRF dominance scale was .43 ($P < .001$), which was higher than the correlations of the total score with each of the other 21 PRF scales (average unsigned $r = .21$). Taken as a whole, therefore, the S-R Inventory of Dominance shares significant variance with a dominance scale that has some construct validity (Jackson, 1967). The moderate size of this correlation, however, indicates that the inventory scores have substantial unique variance, variance which is presumably a function of the fact that the inventory takes both situations and modes of response into account (see Mellstrom, Cicala, & Zuckerman, 1976, for an example of another approach to the validation of an S-R inventory).

Proportions of Variance

Table 1 presents the percentages of the total variance accounted for by persons, situations, modes of response, their three two-way interactions, and the residual for the S-R Inventory of Dominance in two samples.[2] Data for the small Wellesley sample are presented because they demonstrate the stability of the proportions of variance across two different samples. Within the large Harvard sample, the proportions of variance are also very similar between the sexes.

Table 1 also presents data from three other S-R inventories, of anxiousness, hostility, and leisure activity. Discussions of the differences in the proportions of the variance accounted for by the various sources among these three inventories have already ap-

2. In the calculation of the components of variance, a random effects model was used (see Endler & Hunt, 1966).

Table 1. Percentages of variance components from the S-R Inventory of Dominance compared with those from S-R inventories of anxiousness, hostility, and leisure activity.

Source	Dominance			Anxiousness[a]		Hostility[b]		Leisure activity[c]	
	Harvard								
	Men	Women	Wellesley	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Persons	11.2	8.8	8.6	4.4	4.6	19.1	14.8	5.4	3.6
Situations	8.1	7.3	4.8	4.0	7.8	4.6	7.1	1.9	2.1
Modes of Response	7.2	7.4	7.2	24.8	26.6	13.9	15.4	8.0	9.6
Persons × Situations	21.0	23.8	25.9	9.1	9.3	10.4	11.5	4.2	3.8
Persons × Modes of Response	9.0	8.7	8.0	10.3	11.1	12.6	16.2	22.8	19.6
Situations × Modes of Response	4.0	4.7	2.8	7.5	7.0	3.0	3.9	10.0	16.9
Residual	39.6	39.3	42.6	37.1	34.3	32.2	29.3	47.8	44.5

Note.—For the Harvard sample, $N = 84$ for men; $N = 80$ for women. For the Wellesley sample, $N = 18$ (15 women, 3 men).
[a] Percentages are medians of 22 samples for men and 21 samples for women (from Endler & Hunt, 1968).
[b] Percentages are medians of 4 samples (from Endler & Hunt, 1968).
[c] Percentages are means of 2 samples (from Bishop & Witt, 1970).

Table 2. Unit sample generalizability coefficients from the S-R Inventory of Dominance.

Source	Unit sample generalizability coefficients[a]	
	Men	Women
Persons	.14	.11
Situations	.11	.10
Modes of Response	.12	.12
Persons × Situations	.40	.40
Persons × Modes of Response	.25	.22
Situations × Modes of Response	.17	.16

Note.—$N = 84$ for men; $N = 80$ for women.

[a] Because generalizability coefficients vary in magnitude as a positive function of the number of observations, unit sample generalizability coefficients were calculated, with N for persons = situations = modes of response = 1 (see Golding, 1975; Mariotto & Paul, 1975).

peared (Bishop & Witt, 1970; Endler & Hunt, 1968); therefore, we focus on the differences between the S-R Inventory of Dominance and the other inventories taken as a group. The S-R Inventory of Dominance has an intermediate proportion of variance due to persons, a high proportion of variance due to situations, and low proportions of variance due to modes of response, Persons × Modes of Response, and Situations × Modes of Response. Most striking, however, is the very high proportion of variance accounted for by the person-situation interaction for dominance. This interaction accounts for about 25% of the variance in the dominance data, which is two to five times more than in previously reported data on other aspects of personality.

Golding (1975) has convincingly argued that coefficients of generalizability (Cronbach, Gleser, Nanda, & Rajaratnam, 1972) are theoretically more appropriate in the analysis of S-R inventory data than proportions of variance. Table 2 presents the generalizability coefficients for the Harvard sample data for the S-R Inventory of Dominance. It can be seen from the table that for both men and women, the unit sample generalizability (Golding, 1975; Mariotto & Paul, 1975) of the person-situation interaction is both larger than those for the other sources and of substantial magnitude.

Principal Components Analyses

Principal components analyses of the S-R Inventory of Dominance situation scales and of the mode of response scales were

Table 3. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation of the S-R Inventory of Dominance situation scales.

Situation scales	Component loadings		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. There is an argument between some of your friends that must be settled.	.77	.13	.18
2. Someone at work is acting in a way that could hurt a friend of yours.	.74	.24	.07
3. You are in a restaurant with a group of people and have been waiting a long time to be served.	−.06	.44	.63
4. A grocery refuses to allow spoiled food to be returned.	.17	.75	.19
5. You are with a group of friends who are planning to do something you disagree with.	.72	.17	.08
6. You are in a theatre-ticket line and someone pushes ahead.	−.06	.62	.43
7. There is a dangerous condition that could cause a bad accident.	.50	.56	−.18
8. You are on a committee and an important decision is about to be made.	.46	.32	.46
9. You and your neighbors disagree with something that's been happening at your child's school.	.29	.55	.14
10. There is going to be a party and help is needed in making the arrangements.	.28	−.06	.81
11. You are trying to get some sleep and there is a lot of noise.	.18	.58	.03
12. The landlord in your building is not fulfilling his responsibilities.	.40	.63	.11

conducted on the Harvard sample data in order to clarify the inventory's factor structure and to provide data that could be used in the design of future studies. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were subjected to a varimax rotation. Table 3 presents the loadings of each of the situation scales on the three factors that were extracted and rotated. Situations involving friends load highest on the first factor; situations taking place in the "community" load highest on the second factor. The third factor is less clear and seems to include situations involving an imposition on the person.

Table 4 presents the loadings of each of the mode of response scales on the three factors that were extracted and rotated. Modes of response reflecting a dimension of "assertive dominance" load highest on the first factor; modes of response reflecting a dimension of "vocal dominance" load highest on the second factor. The third factor reflects a dimension of "perceived press toward leadership." Although these mode of response factors are psychologi-

Table 4. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation of the S-R Inventory of Dominance mode of response scales.

Mode of response scales	Component loadings		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1. I say what's on my mind.	.40	.80	.22
2. Don't let it concern me.	−.11	−.85	−.10
3. Take charge and determine what is to be done.	.72	.46	.26
4. Want to say something but remain silent.	−.31	−.67	−.27
5. Don't let anyone else decide for me what should be done.	.83	.09	.07
6. Take the lead in figuring out what to do.	.84	.27	.28
7. Let someone else figure out what to do.	−.80	−.26	−.23
8. Make some demands and get things moving.	.63	.44	.33
9. Others want to know how I feel about the situation.	.28	.24	.82
10. Say something but no one pays attention to me.	−.04	−.20	−.81
11. Others ask me to decide what should be done.	.38	.09	.84

Note.—Factor loadings for scales 2, 4, 7, and 10 have been reversed in sign because these scales are scored in the direction opposite to the remaining scales.

cally meaningful, it is important to note that the factor structure also admits of an interpretation in terms of the position of the scales in the inventory, inasmuch as the scales loading most highly on each of the factors are contiguous.[3]

Sex Differences

As was discussed above, no sex differences were found in the proportions of variance accounted for by the various sources in the S-R Inventory of Dominance data. To further examine the data for the presence of sex differences, we calculated a three-way analysis of variance, with sex, situations, and modes of response as factors. Neither a significant main effect for sex nor significant Sex × Situations or Sex × Modes of Response interactions were found. A significant Sex × Situations × Modes of Response interaction did occur, $F(110,17820) = 1.44$, $P < .01$, indicating that the sexes differ in their patterning of the modes of response across the sample of situations.

Discussion

The results of this study support the conclusions of Bowers (1973) and Endler (1973, 1975) that the proportions of variance

3. Principal components analyses for the situation scales and the mode of response scales were also calculated for males and females separately, yielding essentially similar factor structures.

accounted for by person-situation interactions are typically larger than those accounted for by either persons or situations taken separately. The S-R Inventory of Dominance was found to have a larger proportion of variance due to the person-situation interaction than that of any S-R inventory available in the published literature. Moreover, it shows a comparatively high proportion of variance due to situations, and low proportions of variance due to modes of response and the interaction of modes of response with persons and with situations. Of course, S-R inventories can be constructed to yield whatever relative proportions of variance the investigator desires (Moos, personal communication cited in Mischel, 1973; Cartwright, 1975). However, most S-R inventories, including the present one, have probably sampled both situations and modes of response more or less at random from some universe, albeit unspecified. To the extent that this random sampling occurs, the proportions of variance found are generalizable beyond the specific inventory from which they are obtained (see Endler & Hunt, 1969).

It is likely that the proportions of variance found in this study reflect some of the special characteristics of dominance per se. The expression of dominance is entirely interpersonal in nature, while the expression of anxiety, for example, is not. The dominance modes of response are necessarily limited to the realm of social behavior; thus, modes of response and their interactions with other factors might be expected to account for a relatively small amount of variance in dominance. As noted earlier, recent research has emphasized the importance of context on dominance behavior, which might be reflected in our results by the relatively large amount of situation variance. But context is not limited to the immediate, objective situation in which a particular action or experience occurs; it includes the person's perception of the situation, shaped as it is by other cognitive factors including memory of past experiences, attitudes, motives, and plans and expectations. Golding (1977) has recently called attention to the importance of such individual differences in the "construal" of situations. These differences are likely to be more important in social than in nonsocial contexts, contributing to the relatively large component of variance in dominance accounted for by the interaction of persons and situations. The study of dominance

may therefore yield important information regarding the manner in which individuals' differing constructions of their interpersonal world underlie person-situation interactions.

In a comparison of different strategies of assessing dominance, Butt and Fiske (1968) found that the correlates of dominance are related to the level at which dominance is described and measured. Unlike other questionnaires, S-R inventories include different eliciting contexts as well as diverse modes of expression. Because of the detailed manner in which relevant behavior is sampled, the use of an S-R inventory such as the present one could increase our understanding of both the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics of dominance.

It has been argued that S-R inventory studies must begin to examine the nature of the person-situation interactions which they demonstrate (Endler, 1975; Golding, 1975; Sarason et al., 1975), and in this we concur. For example, S-R inventories may be useful in the identification of individuals with different situation or mode of response profile characteristics (such as the low and high variability subjects of Bem & Allen, 1974). Multivariate clustering techniques can be used to systematically explore the meaningfulness of person-situation interactions by relating membership in "response-homogeneous person clusters" to personality and other variables (Golding, 1975). Some investigators have begun to examine S-R inventories of anxiety in such a manner (Magnusson & Ekehammar, 1975; Endler, Magnusson, Ekehammar, & Okada, 1976). It may also be illuminating to search for developmental influences of various sorts on person-situation interactions (e.g., Dworkin, Note 2). Such studies are most likely to be informative when they employ an inventory with a person-situation interaction component of variance that is relatively large. While we recognize that the S-R paradigm has important limitations (cf. Alker, 1977; Olweus, 1977), our results suggest that the S-R Inventory of Dominance is particularly well-suited for further research examining the "how" (Endler, 1973, 1975; Golding, 1975) and "why" (Sarason et al., 1975) of person-situation interactions.

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1. Golin, S., & Hartz, M. A. "Sex differences in variance components of behavioral and instigative aspects of aggression." Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, New York City, April 1976.

2. Dworkin, R. H. "Genetic and environmental influences on person-situation interactions." Paper presented at the meeting of the Behavior Genetics Association, Louisville, Kentucky, April 1977.

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