

# Self-Monitoring: Individual Differences in Orientations to the Social World

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**ABSTRACT** In their articles in this special section of the *Journal of Personality*, the authors have focused their attention on the role of individual differences in self-monitoring for a variety of interpersonal phenomena. In so doing, the authors have provided an overview of the theoretical and empirical contributions of the psychology of self-monitoring to the domains of interest: close relationships, consumer behavior, behavior in the workplace, and social interaction. As each of the contributing authors to this special section suggests, much more theoretical and empirical work is in order if the impact of individual differences in self-monitoring for the phenomena reviewed here is to be fully appreciated. Moreover, the four domains of interest represented in this special section by no means exhaust the areas to which theorists and researchers have applied or can apply the psychology of individual differences in self-monitoring. Given the large nomological network that currently exists involving the self-monitoring construct, it is anticipated that the breadth and depth of applications of the psychology of self-monitoring will only continue to expand as it has in the last 30 years since the appearance of the construct in the literature.

Since its first appearance in the literature almost 30 years ago, the construct of individual differences in self-monitoring has struck a responsive chord with personality theorists and researchers that resonates as strongly today as it has in each of the last three decades.

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*Journal of Personality* 74:3, June 2006

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DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00387.x

Moreover, the reverberation of this chord has been felt not just by the audience of scholars of personality but also by scholars of social, developmental, and industrial-organizational psychology. As is often the case in science, not everyone has been in harmony when it comes to the construct of self-monitoring. Nonetheless, the chorus of voices involving the successful application of individual differences in self-monitoring to psychological processes is a large and diverse one.

### **EVOLUTION OF THE SELF-MONITORING CONSTRUCT**

As it was originally conceptualized, the construct of self-monitoring was designed to capture individual differences in the control of expressive behavior and self-presentation. That is, the construct of self-monitoring was designed to capture “individual differences in the extent to which individuals can and do monitor their self-presentation, expressive behavior, and non-verbal affective displays” (Snyder, 1974, pp. 526–527). The goals of self-monitoring individuals were thought to include communication of genuine emotional experiences, communication of arbitrary emotional experiences, and concealment of inappropriate emotional experiences. In keeping with the focus on expressive behavior and self-presentation, the behavior of high self-monitoring individuals was hypothesized to be guided by the expressive behavior of other individuals, whereas the behavior of low self-monitoring individuals was hypothesized to be driven by their own affective states.

Conceptualizing self-monitoring in terms of expressive behavior and self-presentation was evident in the five conceptual dimensions that were used in the construction of the initial Self-Monitoring Scale: concern with the social appropriateness of self-presentation, attention to social comparison information, control of self-presentation and expressive behavior, strategic displays of self-presentation and affect states, and situational specificity of self-presentation and expressive behavior. Conceptualizing self-monitoring in terms of expressive behavior and self-presentation was also evident in the four studies designed to provide construct validation for the initial Self-Monitoring Scale: (a) peer ratings of control over self-presentation and expressive behavior as well as sensitivity to cues of social appropriateness; (b) scores of groups (stage actors, psychiatric patients)

known, respectively, for their control of self-presentation and expressive behavior or lack thereof; (c) nonverbal expression of arbitrarily chosen emotional states; and (d) attention to social comparison information (i.e., cues about socially appropriate behavior).

Consistent with this initial formulation, many of the early studies of self-monitoring involved investigations of the extent to which individuals (a) noticed and used social cues to guide their behavior (e.g., Rarick, Soldow, & Geizer, 1976; Snyder & Monson, 1975), (b) regulated in a strategic way their displays of affect (e.g., Jones & Baumeister, 1976; Snyder & Swann, 1976), controlled various channels of nonverbal communication (e.g., Cunningham 1977; Lippa, 1978), and engaged in impression management (e.g., Elliott, 1979; Lippa, 1976). However, soon after the appearance of these seminal investigations, individual differences in self-monitoring were linked to distinctions individuals made in the characteristic ways in which they thought of themselves (e.g., Brockner & Eckenrode, 1978; Ickes, Layden, & Barnes, 1978; Sampson, 1978) and of others (e.g., Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976). Accordingly, the meaning of the self-monitoring construct underwent the first of several reformulations.

In early revisions of the theoretical framework underlying self-monitoring, the construct of self-monitoring was still defined in terms of individual differences in the “control of expressive behavior, self-presentation, and nonverbal displays of affect,” and the prototypical high self-monitoring individual and the prototypical low self-monitoring individual were still described in terms of both the ability and motivation to regulate verbal as well as nonverbal modes of self-presentation (Snyder, 1979b, p. 86). Similarly, the properties of the Self-Monitoring Scale were still organized in terms of the five conceptual dimensions that guided the original development of the scale, and validity investigations were still focused on evidence of differences in the regulation of self-presentation and expressive behavior (Snyder, 1979a). The self-monitoring construct was now, however, theoretically and empirically tied to “world views . . . and the underlying dynamics of our interactions with others” (Snyder, 1979b, p. 86). That is, the construct of self-monitoring was expanded to encompass links to self-concepts and social relationships.

It had become clear that the self-monitoring propensities of individuals involved not just the regulation and production of expressive

behavior, displays of affect, and impression management but also fundamental differences in the ways in which individuals thought of themselves (Snyder, 1979a, 1979b). High self-monitors were thought to view themselves as pragmatic persons whose identity was determined largely by situational contingencies and role requirements, whereas low self-monitors were thought to view themselves as principled persons whose identity was determined largely by dispositional factors and enduring attributes. In keeping with these proposed divergences in concepts of the self, high self-monitors were shown to know a great deal about social roles and to use this knowledge to be “the right person at the right place at the right time,” whereas low self-monitors were shown to know a great deal about themselves and to use this knowledge to be “themselves” (e.g., Ickes, Reidhead, & Patterson, 1986; Snyder & Cantor, 1980). Additionally, the connection between personal dispositions such as attitudes and the behavior assumed to result from such attitudes was linked to individual differences in self-monitoring. Low self-monitors were found to be the sort of persons whose actions were very much guided by their attitudes, whereas high self-monitors were found to be the sort of persons whose actions had little to do with their attitudes (e.g., Snyder & Tanke, 1976).

It had also become clear that self-monitoring propensities involved fundamental differences in the ways in which individuals thought of the social world around them (Snyder, 1979a, 1979b). In terms of the cognitive processes that are activated in the service of initiating relationships, high self-monitoring individuals were found to be more likely than low self-monitoring individuals to engage in the mental effort required to lay the foundation for romantic relationships (e.g., Berscheid et al., 1976). And in terms of the behavioral processes that are utilized in the service of initiating relationships, high self-monitoring individuals were found to be more likely than low self-monitoring individuals to engage in the verbal work required to lay the foundation for social relationships (e.g., Garland & Beard, 1979; Ickes & Barnes, 1977).

High self-monitors were also believed to use a variety of interpersonal strategies to organize their social relationships such that their social worlds were compartmentalized. Just as high self-monitors were motivated to be “the right person at the right place at the right time,” so too were high self-monitors motivated to develop social relationships in which they could interact with the right

persons at the right places at the right times. Low self-monitors were also believed to use a variety of interpersonal strategies to organize their social relationships such that their social worlds were compartmentalized. Just as low self-monitors were motivated to be “themselves,” so too were low self-monitors motivated to develop social relationships in which they could interact with the same persons across different places and different times. In keeping with these proposed divergences in the structure of their social worlds, high self-monitors were found to establish relationships using an activity-based principle, whereas low self-monitors were found to establish relationships using a person-based principle (e.g., Snyder, Ganges-tad, & Simpson, 1983; Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

In less than a decade, these initial explorations into the linkage between self-monitoring and (a) self-conceptions and (b) interpersonal relations were followed by a host of subsequent theoretical and empirical forays into these domains (see Snyder, 1987, for a review of this literature). Conjecture about these linkages gave way to confidence about the interconnectedness of individual differences in self-monitoring and matters such as the self and social relationships. Self-monitoring was shown to be related to phenomena such as the accessibility of self-defining information (e.g., Kardes, Sanbonmatsu, Voss, & Fazio, 1986) and the correspondence of self-defining information and relevant behavior (e.g., Ajzen, Timko, & White, 1982; Zanna, Olson, & Fazio, 1980). Self-monitoring was also shown to be related to phenomena such as social relationships (e.g., Snyder et al., 1983; Snyder & Simpson, 1984), social interaction (e.g., Danheiser & Graziano, 1982; Harris & Rosenthal, 1986), behavior in the workplace (e.g., Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982), and consumer behavior (e.g., DeBono, 1987; Snyder & DeBono, 1985).

In retrospect, these evolutions in the development of the self-monitoring construct seem inevitable. In the sciences, the meaning of a construct is often modified by scholars in response to new findings and/or unanticipated results from subsequent investigations, and a construct may be reformulated in ways that are broader than the way in which a construct was initially formulated (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). As seminal thinkers in the area of personality observed many years ago (e.g., Lewin, 1935; Murray, 1938), the individual is always imbedded in some sort of social environment, and any behavior is therefore a function of both the person and the situation. The expansion of the construct of self-monitoring to

encompass not just that facet of the individual involved in the regulation and production of expressive behavior but also the basic and vital ways individuals make sense of themselves and their social relationships was a natural one (see Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, for another historical perspective).

### **OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL SECTION**

Not coincidentally, the contributors to this special section have focused on the divergent ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors make sense of their social worlds. Like members of a chorus ensemble, each contributor has provided a different voice to the self-monitoring composition. Taken together, several familiar and recurrent themes emerge from each of these voices.

First, each of the contributors to this special section provides a state-of-the art overview of theoretical and empirical contributions to our understanding of the dynamics involved in the social behavior of high self-monitors and low self-monitors. In their narrative on the literature concerning self-monitoring and close relationships, Leone and Hawkins note that high self-monitors and low self-monitors try to create a social world for themselves in which they can play a harmonious part. High self-monitors attempt to craft their social worlds in ways that will allow them to “be the right person at the right place at the right time.” That is, high self-monitors approach their friendships (e.g., choosing friends on the basis of being skilled activity partners), romantic relationships (e.g., maintaining an unrestricted orientation to dating), and marriages (e.g., being somewhat uncommitted) in ways that create a segmented world in which role conflict will be minimized. Low self-monitors attempt to craft their social worlds in ways that will allow them to “be themselves.” That is, low self-monitors approach their friendships (e.g., choosing friends on the basis of personal compatibility), romantic relationships (e.g., maintaining a restricted orientation to dating), and marriages (e.g., being relatively committed) in ways that create an integrated world in which self-congruency will be maximized.

DeBono provides a synopsis of the literature on self-monitoring and consumer psychology. In particular, he focuses on two facets of consumer psychology that have received attention from scholars of self-monitoring: advertising reactions and product evaluation. In

this regard, the differential reactions to advertising by high self-monitors and low self-monitors are congruent with the notion that these two types of individuals strive to utilize the marketplace in a way that is functional for their divergent needs. High self-monitors seem to be responsive to image-oriented ads and to evaluate products in terms of the products' potential to enhance their social image. High self-monitors presumably would purchase such products to the extent that doing so would facilitate their attempts to create a favorable image of themselves in the eyes of others. Low self-monitors seem to be responsive to quality-based ads and evaluate products in terms of the products' potential to perform its intended function. Low self-monitors presumably would purchase such products to the extent that doing so would facilitate their attempts to act in ways that fulfilled their personal needs, wants, and desires. In short, high self-monitoring consumers seem to focus on the "exterior" function of products (and aspects of ads related to those external, surface properties), whereas low self-monitoring consumers seem to focus on the "interior" function of products (and aspects of ads related to those internal, inherent properties).

Day and Schleicher, in their narrative on self-monitoring and the workplace, also propose that high self-monitors and low self-monitors try to construct a psychological workplace for themselves that is in tune with their skills. Using their behavioral flexibility and capitalizing on their social adaptability, high self-monitors seem to be especially adept at getting along and getting ahead in the business world. That is, high self-monitors in the workforce use their talents to progress up the ladder of success and achieve status within organizations. Using their behavioral consistency and capitalizing on their personal stability, low self-monitors seem to be particularly good at making sense in the business world. That is, low self-monitors in the workforce use their talents to remain steady and committed in the face of organization-related turmoil and (perhaps) to use their values, attitudes, and principles to resolve ethical dilemmas that arise from conflicting job-related roles.

In their appraisal of the theoretical and empirical work on self-monitoring and social interaction, Ickes and his colleagues also observed that high self-monitors and low self-monitors attempt to manage their social experiences in ways that are congruent with their differential motives: the need to be the right person at the right place and time versus the need to be self-congruent. Compared to low

self-monitors, high self-monitors manage their social experiences either by selectively choosing social settings (e.g., preferences for clearly defined situations) or by purposefully influencing social settings in which they find themselves (e.g., plans of action before social encounters). Ickes and his colleagues, however, put an interesting twist on the interpretation of the findings in this domain of self-monitoring, namely that high self-monitors act not out of a concern for the affective reactions of others but instead out a concern for their own affective reactions.

Second, each of the contributors to this special section comments on the unevenness that exists in the current knowledge base of the dynamics involved in the social behavior of high self-monitors and low self-monitors. In their overview of the literature concerning self-monitoring and close relationships, Leone and Hawkins note that considerably more is known about the romantic relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors than about the friendships and marriages of high self-monitors and low self-monitors. Additionally, Leone and Hawkins found that much is known about the ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors initiate close relationships, substantially less is known about the ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors maintain close relationships, and virtually nothing is known about the ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors terminate close relationships.

DeBono also observed in his analysis of the empirical work on self-monitoring and consumer psychology that theorists and researchers have overlooked some important phenomena. One such phenomenon is actual consumer purchases. In this regard, a jumping-off point for hypotheses concerning individual differences in self-monitoring and purchasing may be Behavioral Decision Theory (see Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998, for a review of the literature). The nature of the relationship between self-monitoring and actual consumer choices remains to be explored, but it is not hard to imagine ways in which choice factors such as value maximization and time-consistent preferences may have differential worth to high self-monitoring consumers and low self-monitoring consumers. And given that behavioral decisions (like purchases) are often the joint product of both disposition factors such as attitudes and situational factors such as norms (see Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, for a review of the literature), several interesting avenues of investigation suggest themselves with respect to heretofore



overlooked consumer factors such as the impact of reference groups (e.g., family, friends).

Day and Schleicher, in their overview of the literature on self-monitoring and the workplace, made a similar discovery. Much information is available about differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in terms of getting along and getting ahead in organizations. That is, differences in self-monitoring are clearly related to success in affiliation and achievement. However, little information is available about differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in terms of making sense in organizations. That is, differences in self-monitoring are not so clearly related to deriving a feeling of predictability and control in the workplace.

In their examination of the theory and research on self-monitoring and social interaction, Ickes and his colleagues did not note unevenness in the coverage of phenomena (e.g., cross-cultural adaptation, use of others' behaviors as cues). Instead, they noted a disparity in the interpretation of these and other social interaction phenomena. That is, the results of numerous investigations of individual differences in self-monitoring and behavior in social encounters have often been misinterpreted as evidence that high self-monitors can modify their words and actions readily as well as effortlessly. Based on their review of a quarter of a century of empirical work, Ickes and his colleagues suggest that the results of this work be interpreted instead as evidence that high self-monitors can modify their words and actions but only with considerable mental and emotional effort.

Third, each of the contributors to this special section notes that much theoretical and empirical work remains to be done before the dynamics involved in the social behavior of high self-monitors and low self-monitors can be fully understood. In their account of the literature concerning self-monitoring and close relationships, Leone and Hawkins advise scholars interested in self-monitoring and close relationships to develop sophisticated, causal models that can account for (a) interaction exchanges in the relationships, (b) dyadic as well as individual levels of analysis, and (c) temporal and situational changes in the course of close relationships. That is, theorists and researchers need to examine the (a) ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors in a close relationship both influence and are influenced by their partners, (b) close relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors as a unit of analysis the dyad

(i.e., pairs of individuals), and (c) dynamics and development of the close relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors as the relationships occur across time and situations.

Although the call for methodological advancements may not be an explicit part of DeBono's overview, it is clear from his synopsis of theory and research on self-monitoring and consumer psychology that such advancements are warranted. For example, DeBono notes that the connection between individual differences in self-monitoring and advertising strategies (image- vs. quality-based) depends in part on the strength of the arguments in the advertisements. One way—but not the only way—of construing this complex of interactive factors is to interpret factors such as argument quality as a mediator variable. In a similar vein, DeBono observes that the connection between individual differences in self-monitoring and advertising strategies (image- vs. quality-based) depends in part on the kind and number of functions associated with a product. Again, one of many ways of framing this amalgamation of interactive factors is to cast factors such as product function as a moderator variable. Searching for mediator and moderator variables concerning self-monitoring and consumer psychology would be consistent with trends in other domains of personality theory and research (cf. Cooper, 2002).

Day and Schleicher, in their review of the extant theory and research on self-monitoring and the workplace, suggest that investigators need to devote attention to matters such as organizational selection processes, legal issues concerning job advancement, and optimum organizational composition. In particular, theoretical and empirical work is called for concerning the (a) ways in which organizations might select high self-monitors and low self-monitors as employees as well as the ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors might choose organizations as workplaces, (b) legal ramifications of differential opportunities between high self-monitors and low self-monitors for job promotion, and (c) differential ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors can contribute to productivity and morale within any organization.

More so than any of the other contributors, Ickes and his colleagues contend that “second generation” sorts of analyses are in order if the role of self-monitoring in social interaction is to be better understood. To this end, Ickes and his colleagues illustrate how some such analyses might proceed using their Actor/Partner Interdependence

Model. Using this model, researchers can disentangle in a dyadic interaction the effects of each partner's individual dispositions (including self-monitoring) as well as the interactive effects of each partner's dispositions on their behaviors in that social encounter. One promising outcome of this approach to investigating social exchanges in different social encounters (e.g., friendship, romance) is identifying the functional rather than topographical nature of social settings. With respect to self-monitoring, this approach might be useful in isolating the different effects of positive affect or different sources of such affect for high self-monitors and low self-monitors as they attempt to regulate their interpersonal exchanges.

Thus, each of the contributors to this special section has provided an up-to-date summary of the extant theory and research on self-monitoring as it relates to close relationships, consumer behavior, workplace behavior, and social interaction. However, not all scholars of research on self-monitoring might agree that the reviews in the individual contributions to this special section represent "the state of the art." That is, some scholars might argue that the conceptual and empirical foundations of these reviews are fundamentally flawed.

### *Psychometric Issues*

The expansion in the conceptualization of self-monitoring has not been without discord. While some scholars explored the external correlates of self-monitoring (see Snyder, 1987, for a review of the literature at that time), other scholars questioned the internal structure of the self-monitoring construct (e.g., Briggs, Cheek, & Buss, 1980; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). In particular, several investigators discovered through the use of factor-analytic techniques that scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale could be grouped into several seemingly distinct factors (see Briggs & Cheek, 1986, for a review of these studies at that time). Although there initially were differences of opinion among researchers concerning the precise number of facets in the Self-Monitoring Scale, there eventually emerged a consensus that the scale was multifactorial in nature and that three separate factors could be found in the original version of the scale (cf. Briggs & Cheek, 1986; Snyder & Gangestad, 1986).

*The Self-Monitoring Scale.* No consensus emerged, however, on the empirical significance of the fact that scores on the Self-Monitoring

Scale could be decomposed into three factors. One empirical derivation of the discord concerning the original Self-Monitoring Scale was the development of alternative measures of individual differences in self-monitoring. For example, using a series of exploratory factor analyses and a set of face valid items, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) attempted to create a Revised Self-Monitoring Scale with an item content that was consistent with the five conceptual dimensions underlying the early conceptualization of the self-monitoring construct (see Snyder, 1974, 1979b).

Based on the results of their analyses, however, Lennox and Wolfe ultimately settled on a Revised Self-Monitoring Scale that only tapped individual differences in sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others and in ability to modify self-presentation. A Concern for Social Appropriateness Scale was also developed by Lennox and Wolfe to tap individual differences in cross-situational variability in behavior and attention to social comparison information. Whereas scores on the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale were independent of scores of measures of anxiety, scores on the Concern for Social Appropriateness Scale were related to scores on measures of anxiety. In creating these measures, Lennox and Wolfe expended considerable effort to devise instruments that were free of contamination with extroversion/sociability. Nonetheless, judging by the frequency with which these alternatives have been subsequently used by researchers, some assessment devices (i.e., the 18-item Self-Monitoring Scale; Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) have proven more popular than others (e.g., the 13-item Revised Self-Monitoring Scale; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984).

Another empirical derivation of the discord concerning the original Self-Monitoring Scale was the assessment of the differential predictive power of scores on the scale as a whole and scores on each of the three separate factors. Some investigators found evidence for the predictive superiority of the separate factor scores (see Briggs & Cheek, 1986, for a review of these studies). Other investigators found evidence for the predictive superiority of the total scale scores (see Snyder & Gangestad, 1986, for a review of these studies).

Making sense of any set of mixed findings is usually a difficult task. In this instance, making sense of these conflicting results is made even more challenging by nuances in the methodologies employed in many of these investigations. In conducting their analyses, some researchers decided to dichotomize scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and its subscales (e.g., Cheek, 1982; Wolfe, Lennox, & Hudiburg, 1983),

whereas other researchers decided to use the full range of scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and its subscales (e.g., Miell & LeVoi, 1985; Riggio & Friedman, 1983). In designing their investigations, some researchers have chosen to use the 25-item Self-Monitoring Scale (e.g., Gabrenya & Arkin, 1980), others have chosen to use the 18-item Self-Monitoring Scale (e.g., Briggs & Cheek, 1988; John, Cheek, & Klohnen, 1996), and still others have chosen to use subsets of items from one of the two scales (e.g., Finch & West, 1997). In measuring participants' responses, some researchers utilized a true-false answer format (e.g., Briggs & Cheek, 1988; John et al., 1996), whereas other researchers utilized a Likert-type answer format (e.g., Briggs et al., 1980; Miller & Thayer, 1989). These procedural and assessment variations have complicated attempts to determine the utility of different metrics (total scores vs. subscale scores) in predicting the cognitive, affective, and behavioral correlates of self-monitoring. Nonetheless, there may be theoretical as well as practical reasons for continuing to evaluate the extent to which total scores and subscale scores are differentially related to various criterion variables (see Carver, 1989, for a discussion of this issue).

As was the case with matters of empirical significance, no consensus emerged on the theoretical significance of the fact that scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale could be decomposed into three factors. Briggs and Cheek (1986), for example, argued that the existence of three separate factors underlying scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale was sufficient evidence that several personality variables, rather than one personality variable, are tapped by the scale. Because items in the Self-Monitoring Scale were associated with three distinct personality variables, Briggs and Cheek reached two conclusions.

First, they asserted that interpretation of total scores on the scale is conceptually ambiguous. That is, two or more persons may be classified as high self-monitors even though the pattern of their scores on the individual factors was quite different. Second, they asserted that interpretation of relationships between the total scores on the scale and other criterion variables is causally ambiguous. That is, when compared to total scores on the scale or even to factor scores on the scale, scores from the individual factors may be differentially related to measures of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses.

Snyder and Gangestad (1986) countered that scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale did, in fact, reflect one general factor. As evidence

of their assertion, Snyder and Gangestad pointed out that factor-analytic techniques could be used to produce one unrotated factor on which most of the scale items loaded, and they argued that a psychometrically compelling case could be made for examining unrotated factor patterns. Using taxometric analyses, Gangestad and Snyder (1985b) provided evidence that there was a discrete latent variable underlying variability in scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and that this variable accounted for more variance in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses than did scores on either the full scale or the three separate factors within the scale. Using twin study analyses, Gangestad and Snyder (1985a) provided evidence that there is a heritable component underlying variability in scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale and that factor scores on the scale shared a substantial amount of genetic influence.

Although this exchange between groups of self-monitoring scholars is representative of the lively debate that has occurred, this and other exchanges are undoubtedly not the last words on these psychometric matters. Indeed, several analytical tools have been suggested as means of addressing the theoretical utility of scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale. These tools include but are not limited to confirmatory factor analysis (Briggs & Cheek, 1986), structural equation modeling (Hull, Lehn, & Tedlie, 1991), and latent class analysis (Finch & West, 1997). Whether these or other analytical tools are valuable in explicating the meaning of scores on the Self-Monitoring Scale has not yet been fully determined.

*The Self-Monitoring Construct.* Just as no agreement has emerged on the optimal assessment of self-monitoring, no agreement has emerged on the optimal conceptualization of self-monitoring. Discord remains as to whether or not one general factor underlies the foundation of individual differences in self-monitoring (cf. Finch & West, 1997; Hoyle & Lennox, 1991; Lennox, 1988; Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). Discord also remains as to whether or not two latent classes underlie the foundation of individual differences in self-monitoring (cf. Gangestad & Snyder, 1985a, 1985b, 1991; Miller & Thayer, 1989). Indeed, the existence of self-monitoring as a construct independent of other constructs such as extroversion has been hotly debated (cf. Briggs & Cheek, 1988; John et al., 1996; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000).

Take, for example, the Briggs and Cheek point of view. Briggs and Cheek (1988) explored the psychometric properties of scores on both

the original and revised versions of the Self-Monitoring Scale. In so doing, these investigators examined the unrotated factor structure of scores on the scale (cf. Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). Using the responses of over 3,000 respondents, Briggs and Cheek identified two factors underlying scores on the Self-Monitoring Scales. Briggs and Cheek identified one of the factors as social surgency (i.e., a combination of extroversion, social confidence, and instrumental orientation) and the other factor as other-directedness. That is, these investigators concluded that neither version (18-item, 25-item) of the Self-Monitoring Scale adequately represented the construct of self-monitoring as defined by Snyder (1974, 1979b, 1987). This conclusion was based on the content of the items in each factor as well as patterns of correlations between the factors and measures of other attributes (e.g., sociability, ambition).

Briggs and Cheek also noted that many of the scale items in the original Self-Monitoring Scale that involved views of the self (principled vs. pragmatic) were deleted from the revised version of the scale. Consequently, they suggested that the revised Self-Monitoring Scale, at best, only represented individual differences in interpersonal orientations and not individual differences in views of the self as suggested by Snyder (1979b, 1987). Moreover, they asserted that the nature of these orientations would best be conceptualized in terms such as acquisitive versus self-protective self-presentation (e.g., Arkin, 1981; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; Wolfe, Lennox, & Cutler, 1986) as opposed to unrestricted/activity-based versus restricted/partner-based interpersonal orientations (see Leone & Hawkins, this issue). In short, Briggs and Cheek seemed to recommend that the time had come for self-monitoring scholars to move beyond the construct of self-monitoring.

Or take, for example, the Lennox and Wolfe point of view. As results from factor analyses of the Self-Monitoring Scale began to accumulate, Lennox and Wolfe (1984) noted that the results of these analyses were problematic for two reasons. First, factors emerging from factor-analytic studies did not correspond conceptually to four of the five hypothetical dimensions that guided the development of the original Self-Monitoring Scale. In their view, only the Other-Directedness factor matched one of the conceptual components (attention to social comparison information) of the self-monitoring construct (although a case could be made that the Acting factor could be interpreted as matching the control of self-presentation

component of the self-monitoring construct). Second, factors emerging from factor-analytic studies involved dissimilar patterns of correlations with other variables. Scores on the Extroversion factor seemed to be related to gregariousness and the presence of social confidence, whereas scores on the Other-Directedness factor seemed to be related to shyness and a lack of social confidence. These two sources of disenchantment with the construct of self-monitoring and its measure led Lennox and Wolfe to suggest an alternative theoretical model of self-monitoring (Lennox, 1988; Wolfe et al., 1986).

In examining the literature involving factor-analytic studies as well as the content of Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1974), Lennox and Wolfe focused on the often-repeated finding of scores forming factors that have been widely interpreted as extroversion/sociability and other-directedness (see Briggs & Cheek, 1986, or Lennox, 1988, for reviews of some of these studies). In particular, Lennox and Wolfe noted that the Extroversion factor seemed to be comprised of content that carried a favorable connotation (e.g., gregariousness, social confidence), whereas the Other-Directedness factor seemed to be comprised of content that carried an unfavorable connotation (e.g., shyness, social insecurity). They similarly noted that in the original Self-Monitoring Scale, the content of some items (e.g., "I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.") carries a favorable connotation (e.g., active, assertive), whereas the content of some items (e.g., "When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.") carries an unfavorable connotation (e.g., passive, conforming). The nature of these factors and these items led Lennox and Wolfe to postulate that the Self-Monitoring Scale represents two social strategies with different motivations: acquisitive and protective self-presentation (see also Arkin, 1981). The acquisitive form of self-presentation reflects a desire to acquire social approval and is thought to be assessed by scores on the Revised Self-Monitoring Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; Wolfe et al., 1986). The protective form of self-presentation reflects a desire to avoid social disapproval and is thought to be assessed by scores on the Concern for Social Appropriateness Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; Wolfe et al., 1986). In short, Lennox and Wolfe seemed to recommend that the time had come for self-monitoring scholars to return to the origin of the construct of self-monitoring (i.e., individual differences in self-presentation).



To a large extent, the continued debate on the factorial structure of the self-monitoring construct and measures thereof involves what some scientists see as the dual challenges for issues of construct validity: explicating constructs and measuring constructs (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Shadish et al., 2002). These problems of explication and measurement are derived, in part, from the abstract nature of all constructs such as self-monitoring. As Mark has noted (2002), scholars can rightfully debate whether a construct has been conceptualized at too general a level (e.g., the Briggs et al. position that self-monitoring is not a unitary construct) or at too specific a level (e.g., the Snyder and Gangestad position that self-monitoring is not a composite construct).

How will this debate ultimately be resolved, if at all? What are the prototypical features of self-monitoring? Any attempt to answer such questions can, at best, be speculative, and any apparent resolution to this controversy is likely to be temporary. The process of construct validity is a continual one, and heated discussions of the explication and measurement of constructs often result in conceptual insights and advances in understanding (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Shadish et al., 2002).

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

There are several broad-spectrum overviews of the self-monitoring literature (see Snyder, 1979a, 1979b, 1987, 1996). Based on a casual perusal of these overviews, readers may very well conclude that much is currently known about individual differences in self-monitoring. A similar conclusion could be drawn by readers of each article in this special section. Specifically, readers might decide that a great deal is known about the role of self-monitoring in close relationships, consumer behavior, social interaction, and workplace behavior. As many scholars of self-monitoring have suggested, however, much more remains to be discovered about the roles that individual differences in self-monitoring play in our lives.

Take, for example, self-monitoring and the workplace. As Day and Schleicher indicate in their review of this literature, much more theoretical and empirical work remains concerning the impact of individual differences in self-monitoring for behavior in the workplace. In particular, little, if any, attention has been paid to potential

relationships between self-monitoring and phenomena of longstanding interest in industrial/organizational psychology such as job burnout (see Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, for a review of the literature).

Burnout is an enduring response to long-term intrapersonal and interpersonal stressors in the workplace in which the individual experiences feelings and beliefs of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach, 1998). Although burnout was initially thought to be a phenomena that occurred primarily, if not exclusively, in individuals working in human services, health care, and educational occupations, burnout is now recognized as a phenomena that occurs in a number of individuals working in technology, military, and managerial occupations. The experience of burnout in the workplace is associated with deficits in job performance such as lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and employee turnover; the experience of burnout in the workplace is also associated with problems in physical and mental health such as physiological stress and depression (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

The prevalence and cost of burnout in the workplace naturally begs several questions concerning self-monitoring. By virtue of their different orientations to the social world, will high self-monitors and low self-monitors be equally susceptible to burnout? Given that high self-monitors and low self-monitors occupy roles of different rank in organizations (see Day & Schleicher, this issue), will certain job, occupation, and/or organizational factors mediate the extent to which high self-monitors and low self-monitors experience burnout? To the extent that high self-monitors and low self-monitors are differentially susceptible to burnout, will high self-monitors and low self-monitors also experience divergent personal and professional outcomes in their workplaces as well as in their homes?

Few, if any, empirical answers to these questions can be found in the literature, but there seem to be considerable untapped sources of answers to these questions. Take, for example, some of the known correlates of burnout. As individuals experience increasing levels of burnout in the workplace, those individuals feel less satisfaction with their job and less commitment to the organization for which they work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Given that high self-monitors feel less job satisfaction and organizational commitment than do low self-monitors (see Day & Schleicher, this issue), high self-monitors can be expected to experience more burnout than will low

self-monitors. However, as individuals experience increasing levels of burnout in the workplace, those individuals feel less involvement with their jobs (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Given that low self-monitors feel less involved with their jobs than do high self-monitors (see Day & Schleicher, this issue), low self-monitors can be expected to experience more burnout than would high self-monitors.

As the foregoing suggests, the relationship between individual differences in self-monitoring and burnout in the workplace may be a complex one. The complexity of this relationship may be reflected in part by differences in the etiology of burnout for high self-monitors and low self-monitors. That is, both high self-monitors and low self-monitors may experience burnout but for different reasons.

It has been suggested that the degree to which burnout occurs may depend on the degree to which the nature of personnel and the nature of the job are mismatched (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Personnel may be mismatched to the job in terms of a sense of community. That is, the structure of some jobs may be such that interpersonal contacts are difficult or impersonal, and the nature of some organization may be such that interpersonal conflicts are chronic and unresolved. Given that the social networks of low self-monitors tend to be smaller but more intimate than the networks of high self-monitors (see Leone & Hawkins this issue), low self-monitors may be less distressed than high self-monitors by a general lack of perceived connectedness to others in their workplaces. Personnel may be mismatched to the job in terms of a sense of values. That is, the structure of some jobs may be such that individuals may feel compelled to act in ways that are incongruent with their own values, and the nature of some organizations may be such that workplace disputes are not handled in ways that involve distributive or procedural justice. Given that low self-monitors are more disturbed than are high self-monitors by value-discrepant behavior (see Snyder, 1987, for a review of the literature), low self-monitors may be more distressed than high self-monitors by a general lack of ethics and fairness in their workplaces.

Clearly, much more theoretical and empirical work remains concerning the impact of individual differences in self-monitoring on behavior in the workplace. The same point can be made for any of the other arenas (close relationships, consumer behavior, social interaction) covered in this special section. Indeed, there are many

domains of potential interest involving individual differences in self-monitoring that have yet to be explored. For example, there has been considerable speculation about the developmental trajectory of self-monitoring across the life span (e.g., Graziano, Leone, Musser, & Lautenschlager, 1987). Yet, relatively little is known about the origins of individual differences in self-monitoring (cf. Gangestad & Snyder, 1985a; Graziano & Waschull, 1995). Or take, for example, the possible link between self-monitoring and mental health. There is some preliminary evidence concerning the incidence of mental health problems in high self-monitors and low self-monitors (cf. Leone, 1988; Snyder, 1987), the etiology of depressive episodes for high self-monitors and low self-monitors (e.g., Snyder & Smith, 1984), and the coping strategies used by high self-monitors and low self-monitors (e.g., Snyder & Smith, 1984). Nonetheless, virtually nothing is known about what therapies are most effective for high self-monitors and low self-monitors or what kinds of therapists are best matched to high self-monitors and low self-monitors (cf. Harris & Rosenthal, 1986). Obviously, there are many domains in which the role of individual differences in self-monitoring has yet to be fully explored.

### SUMMARY

The state-of-the art status of the articles in this special section will undoubtedly be short-lived. Even with the appearance of this special section, there is continued theoretical speculation about the construct of self-monitoring (see Hoyle & Sowards, 1993, and Ickes et al. in this issue). For example, in their recent reappraisal of the psychometric properties and correlates of the Self-Monitoring Scale, Gangestad and Snyder (2000) offer a refined interpretation of the self-monitoring construct. In this latest theoretical perspective, individual differences in self-monitoring are construed in terms of differential tendencies to engage or refrain from certain forms of *impression management*.

High self-monitors are thought to be motivated by a desire to construct and create social images of themselves that involve social status. That is, high self-monitors presumably derive a sense of satisfaction from being perceived in ways that entitle them to favorable social outcomes. Accordingly, high self-monitors ought to act in

ways that let them create social worlds in which their *social value* will be enhanced. Low self-monitors are thought to be motivated by a desire to create social images of themselves that involve self-congruence. That is, low self-monitors presumably derive a sense of satisfaction from being perceived in ways that preserve their reputation as genuine, sincere individuals. Accordingly, low self-monitors ought to act in ways that let them create social worlds in which their *self-congruency* will be enhanced.

Clearly, there are indications that the construct of self-monitoring may be undergoing another reformulation. Whether this reformulation represents a change at a lower, core level of conceptualization or an extension at a higher, abstract level of conceptualization remains to be seen. But as the construct evolves further, our understanding of the role of individual differences in self-monitoring in close relationships, consumer behavior, workplace behavior, and social interaction will undoubtedly evolve as well.

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