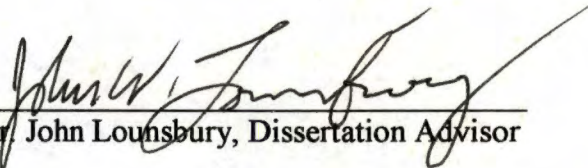
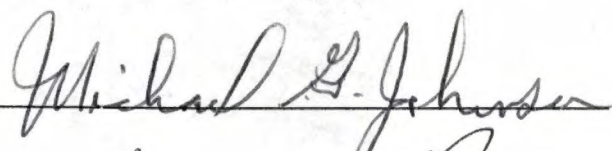
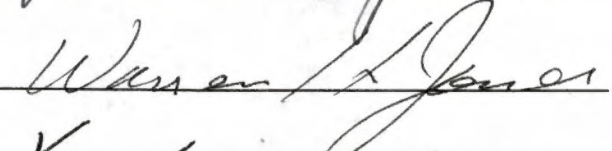
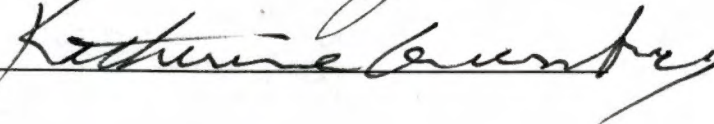


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Wendy C. Chambers entitled "The Utility and Implications of Empathy in the Workplace." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.


Dr. John Lounsbury, Dissertation Advisor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

The Utility and Implications of Empathy in the Workplace

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctorate of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Wendy C. Chambers

August 2000

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of these two studies was to develop and validate an empathy scale contextualized for the workplace. In the first study, a Workplace Empathy scale was designed and administered to 153 students at the University of Tennessee. The students were instructed to answer the items in relation to a past or present job. An internal consistency reliability of .82 was observed for the final set of items. In the second study, 185 employees from eight different companies voluntarily participated in completing the Workplace Empathy (WE) scale, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, a general measure of empathy), a Job Involvement scale, a Job Satisfaction scale and a Customer Service Orientation scale. The employees' supervisors also rated the importance of empathy to the performance of each employee's job. WE and the IRI were significantly related ($r = .50, p < .01$) and WE was significantly related to customer service orientation and job satisfaction, but not job involvement. WE also accounted for additional variance above and beyond the IRI in predicting customer service and job satisfaction. Participants in jobs where empathy was important for performance had significantly higher WE scores than participants in jobs in which empathy was of moderate or little importance, whereas IRI scores did not significantly differ between the two groups. The combined results demonstrate the importance of measuring empathy in the context of the workplace.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	Introduction	1
	Historical Definitions.....	1
	Statement of the Problem	2
	Objective of the Study.....	2
	Overview of the Chapters.....	2
II.	What is Empathy: competing definitions through the ages	4
	Cognitive Perspective	4
	Affective Perspective.....	6
	Combined Cognitive/Affective/Behavioral Perspective.....	6
	Summary	8
III.	Construct Validity: models and correlates of empathy.....	10
	Models and Concepts of Empathy/Empathic Process	10
	Correlates with Empathy.....	12
	Self-Esteem	13
	Ability	13
	Work Performance, Commitment, Absenteeism.....	14
	Consideration.....	14
	Summary	15
IV.	Theoretical foundations: clinical, social, and physiological	17
	Clinical roots	17
	Findings from Developmental and Social Psychology.....	18
	Emotionality	19
	Emotional Regulation	19
	Empathy and Social Skills.....	20
	Distinction between Sympathy and Empathy.....	21
	Further Findings from Social Psychology.....	22
	Attribution Theory	22
	Helping.....	25
	Physiological Studies.....	26
	Summary	28
V.	Gender Differences in Empathy	30
	Summary	31
VI.	Empathy in the Workplace.....	33
	Inconsistent Findings in the Workplace.....	36

VI.	Empathy in the Workplace.....	33
	Inconsistent Findings in the Workplace.....	36
	Summary	38
VII.	Measures of Empathy.....	39
	Truax and Barrett-Lennard Scales	40
	The Hogan Empathy Scale.....	40
	The Mehrabian-Epstein Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy	41
	Stotland Et Al.'s Empathy Scale	42
	The Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised	42
	Interpersonal Reactivity Index	42
	Summary	43
VIII.	Overview of Literature and Future Directions in Research	45
	Overview of Literature.....	45
	Future Directions of Research.....	47
IX.	Proposal to Study Empathy in the Workplace.....	49
	Justification	49
	Empathy defined for the Workplace.....	50
	Objectives.....	51
	Research Questions.....	54
X.	Validation of the Workplace Empathy Measure	57
	Overview of the Research	57
	Methods.....	57
	Participants.....	57
	Measures	58
	Procedure.....	59
	Results.....	61
	Summary	67
	Discussion	69
	REFERENCES.....	76
	APPENDICES	91
	Appendix A: Pilot Empathy Measure.....	92
	Appendix B: Informed Consent for Pilot Study.....	97
	Appendix C: Subject Matter Expert Rating Form.....	98
	Appendix D: Dissertation Informed Consent	99
	Appendix E: Subject Occupations.....	100
	VITA.....	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Final Workplace Empathy Items and Item-Total Correlations	62
Table 2: Correlations Between WE (Workplace Empathy Measure) and IRI (Interpersonal Reactivity Index) and Related Work Measures.....	65
Table 3: Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression for IRI (Interpersonal Reactivity Index) and WE (Workplace Empathy Measure) when Accounting for Variance in Customer Service, Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement.....	68

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Definitions

The concept of empathy has been defined from multiple perspectives. One of the oldest definitions comes from Germany, "einfuhlung," which is translated as "feeling together with" or a form of internal impersonation (Lipps, 1907 in Goldstein & Michaels, 1985). Titchener (1909 in Wispe, 1986) translated Lipps' concept as empathy, from the Greek empathia, as a means of preserving the idea of the self projected into the perceived object.

Later definitions from the fields of sociology and psychology grew more precise and involved taking the role of another, pretending to be that person, engaging in vicarious introspection or stepping into another's shoes (Mead, 1934; Coutou, 1951; Katz, 1963; Blackman, Smith, Brokman, & Stern, 1958). Buber (1948) and Dymond (1949) focused on the ability to engage in and understand the world of the other by conceptualizing empathy as the ability to transpose oneself from one place to another and integrate with the thoughts, emotions, and behavior of the other.

Others elaborated on the communication between the empathizing individual and the empathized-with target by specifying that empathy involves the following steps: perception of both verbal/nonverbal messages from another, understanding the communication of the other, awareness of one's own physical responses to the other, not mistaking others' feelings for one's own, and accurately communicating one's 'in-tune' feelings and understanding to the other (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985).

Statement of the Problem

In contrast to many of the previous definitions, Kohler (1929, in Davis, 1979), distinguished between understanding the world of the other intellectually and emotionally by defining empathy as the understanding, but *not* the sharing of the emotion. This leads to the present day conceptualizations of empathy that can be viewed from three perspectives: cognitive, affective, and combinations of cognitive, affective, and behavioral perspectives. However, it is still debatable whether the construct can be split into three distinct typologies or if it is merely one construct with three facets. It is necessary to distinguish this in order to establish a consensus on the definition of the construct and understand its potential relationships to other constructs. Furthermore, the behaviors to which empathy is linked are debatable and the construct has yet to be extensively researched in applied setting outside of the therapeutic context.

Objectives of the Studies

The purpose of the following studies is to provide an overview of the empathy research to date and validate a measure of empathy in the workplace. The intent is to investigate the role of context in understanding and defining empathy as well as exploring the utility of the construct outside the therapeutic arena.

Overview of Chapters

The following chapter explores the components of empathy as a construct along with the similarities and differences of their respective proponents. Chapter 3 investigates the construct validity of empathy and Chapter 4 explores the theoretical foundations of empathy, reviewing findings from clinical, social, and physiological studies of empathy. Chapter 5 summarizes literature on gender differences in empathy and chapter 6

addresses empathy in the workplace. Chapter 7 investigates measures of the construct to date and Chapter 8 addresses the present state of research on empathy and suggests future directions. Chapter 9 presents the proposal of the two studies involved in the construct validation of a measure of empathy in the workplace and Chapter 10 addresses the method, results and discussion of the findings of the two studies.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS EMPATHY (OR WHAT IS IT NOT?)

The concept of empathy has gone through many changes throughout the years, ranging from the state/trait debate (Duan & Hill, 1996), to conflict over whether it is one construct or several. Concerning the latter argument, some of the different types of empathy that have been suggested are additive empathy (Means, 1973), emotional empathy (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972), primordial empathy (Katz, 1963), genotypic and phenotypic empathy (Hogan, 1975), individual and mass empathy (Reik, 1949), cognitive, affective, and cognitive/affective empathy (Gladstein, 1977), postural empathy (Allport, 1937), and compathy/mimpathy/unipathy/transpathy (Schelar, 1954). Empathy has also been condensed into basic empathy (a natural feeling for others) and trained empathy (taught/learned for professional purposes) (Alligood, 1992). However, the definitions of empathy over the past 50 years can be narrowed down to three perspectives: cognitive, affective, or a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. It appears unsettled, based on the following literature, whether these definitions are related to a multi-faceted single construct or are several independent constructs.

Cognitive Perspective

From a purely cognitive perspective, empathy has been viewed as a way of relating and understanding the other's experience while maintaining emotional distance (Wolf, 1988 in Karlin, 1990) or even knowing *why* the person is feeling/thinking that way, yet not necessarily agreeing with the person's thoughts or feelings (Lefton, Buzzota, & Sherberg, 1980).

Other cognitivists have portrayed empathy in terms of accuracy of prediction, such as the difference between one's ratings of a target and that target's self-ratings on a specified trait (e.g., Dymond, 1949; Dymond, 1950 in Duan & Hill, 1996) the ability to predict personality test scores (Fleishman & Salter, 1963) or behavior (Friedman, 1985). Karlin (1990) described "managerial empathy" as the "extent to which a workplace manager is perceived to *understand, and communicate [his/her] understanding*, of an employee's thoughts and feelings in their work relationship, as measured by a questionnaire" (p. 49-50). Though feelings are mentioned in his definition, the cognitive component, "understanding," is the focus.

Perhaps the most unusual cognitive perspective of empathy is that which has been attributed to effective manipulators, who have the ability to attune or understand, but not *identify*, with the emotional state of another. He/she understands the other purely in the service of his/her own needs or in avoidance of pain. Some famous film actors/actresses who have portrayed scoundrels include Michael Caine and Steve Martin in "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" and John Malkovich and Glenn Close in "Dangerous Liaisons." To meet their own selfish ends, all of these characters expertly manipulated people by using their ability to understand, but not emotionally relate to the state of another. In the words of Basch, (1983), "...the world's greatest scoundrels have been exquisitely and unerringly attuned to grasping the significance of the unconscious or unspoken affective communications of others and have used that knowledge to achieve base aims" (p. 120). Though some might have categorized this as an affective definition of empathy, I instead placed it under a cognitive rubric as it shows that the empathizing person clearly lacks in

affective identification, even though he/she understands the emotional state of the other very well.

Affective Perspective

From an affective perspective, empathy has sometimes been conceived of as "Emotional Empathy" (Stotland, 1969) or the parallel emotional experience of the observer with the experience of the other because he/she perceives that the other is experiencing or about to experience emotion. However, the *emotion need not be the same* that the other is experiencing. An illustration is seeing someone crying out of frustration and the observer crying also, but out of sadness for the person, not frustration. In contrast, Eisenberg, Wentzel, and Harris (1998) defined empathy as an affective response that is highly similar what the other is feeling. Regardless, all of these researchers conceptualize empathy as affectively-focused.

Combined Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Perspectives

The multi-faceted approach of defining empathy as including cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects, has received the most support not only in terms of sheer number among the definitions of empathy, but taking both emotional and cognitive aspects of empathy into account has also been suggested to allow for predictive superiority (Coke, Batson, and McDavis, 1978; Iannotti, 1979 in Davis, 1979).

In extending the definition of empathy beyond the cognitive perspective, Kohut (1984), described empathy as analyzing one's own feelings that have been aroused by another's emotional expression *yet* remaining objective. Barrett-Lennard (1981) viewed empathy as an evolving awareness of another, which involved communicating the desire to know the other as well as comprehending and *expressing* what is tantamount to the

other at that time, yet still maintaining emotional distance. Other researchers have also supported a similar definition (Goldstein & Michaels, 1985; Macarov, 1978; Gladstein, 1977). Thus, in these conceptualizations of empathy, there is the comprehension of the others' cognitive and emotional experience and communication of this comprehension, but the actual sensual experience of the other's affect is still lacking.

Other researchers felt that accurately perceiving the cognitive and emotional experience of the other constituted empathy. In his study of naturalistic social cognition, Ickes (1990) defined "empathic accuracy" as the ability to accurately detect the emotional valence and content of another's situation. Specifically, he calculated the valence accuracy of a dyad exchange for each individual as "the index of the percentage of instances in which a dyad member's inference about the overall emotional tone of his or her partner's [rating of] positive, negative, or neutral matched the actual valence label assigned to the [rating] by the partner" (p. 733). The content accuracy was "an index to the degree to which a dyad member's written description of the inferred content of his or her partner's [rating] matched the actual content of the sentence that the partner had written to describe the [rating]" (p. 733). Still other researchers included the emotional sharing of the others' affective experience in addition to the perception of the experience in defining empathy (Olden, 1953; Karush, 1979; Kohut, 1966).

In a more comprehensive definition of empathy, Levenson & Ruef (1992) summarized the literature on empathy as encompassing *knowing* what another person is feeling, *feeling* what another is feeling, and *responding compassionately* to another's distress. Some individual authors developed their own comprehensive definitions such as Basch's (1983) "Mature Empathy" or the ability to accurately appraise another's

emotional situation and to be receptive and respond to another person's needs. Basch specified that one does not feel "threatened" by the emotional needs of another, nor does one mistake those needs for one's own. Thus, although the observer experiences the emotions of the other, he/she does not own them and maintains some distance. Finally, Feldstein & Gladstein (1980) defined empathy as a process involving cognitive empathy (role-taking ability, ability to comprehend another's frame of reference/thoughts/feelings), affective empathy (unconscious identification of feelings with another), and behavioral empathy in the form of communicating the verbal and nonverbal empathic experience.

Summary

Historically, empathy has been defined from cognitive, affective, and combinations of cognitive, affective and behavioral perspectives. From a purely cognitive perspective, empathy involves understanding the emotional situation of the other. From a purely affective perspective, empathy is experiencing an emotional reaction to another's emotional state, which may be parallel to or different from what the other is experiencing. The combined cognitive/affective/behavioral perspective involves understanding another's situation cognitively and affectively and frequently communicating this understanding. Parallel emotions are not always experienced, depending on the particular theorists' perspective. This comprehensive definition has been the most pervasive in the literature and while the contributions of different theoretical perspectives may have been helpful in understanding the complexity of empathy, theorists are still far from achieving a consensus on a definition which is a desirable goal for the purpose of maximum utility of a construct. In the following

reviews of the literature, the type of empathy the particular author was addressing, if known, will be indicated.

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Construct validity involves the theories surrounding a construct and their subsequent empirical verification (Messick, 1989). This includes the components of a construct, its correlates, and potentially what it predicts. Although this would also pertain to the consistency in behaviors or item responses that reflect particular determinants, actual measures of empathy will be discussed in Chapter 7. The following is a discussion of different models of empathy, different conceptualizations of the construct, and several traits/behaviors with which it is associated.

Models and Concepts of Empathy/Empathic Process

Davis (1979) distinguished between empathic concern (e.g., compassion leading to a helping response, for instance), personal distress (egotistic response of help because of need to self-soothe in response to experience of other...still respond *same way*), and debilitation (so highly empathic that overwhelmed by emotions) in his model of empathy. Through a series of validation studies, he developed a scale of empathy, normed on psychology undergraduates (over 500 males and 500 females), that yielded the following factors: *Fantasy*, *Perspective Taking (PT)*, *Empathic Concern (EC)*, and *Personal Distress (PD)*. Davis labeled the EC and PD subscales as emotional in tone and the Fantasy and PT subscales as cognitive.

Davis' study yielded several significant findings. The Fantasy subscale significantly correlated .53 with the Mehrabian-Epstein Emotional Empathy scale for females (no data for males). Also, the greater the PT score, the greater the subjects' self-

esteem for males and females. Perhaps this finding emerged because the greater the ability to take the perspective of another, the more settled or confident someone is in who they are. The EC scale also significantly correlated greater than .50 with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire's F-scale, which describes feminine qualities (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974 in Davis, 1979). Across gender, the PD subscale had the strongest significant correlations with other measures with greater PD indicating lower self-esteem, greater fearfulness, shyness, social anxiety, and loneliness. Low correlations also emerged between most of the emotional scales, demonstrating orthogonality, and, while other correlations between the subscales were significant, they were under .30. Lastly, women had higher empathy scores overall. In short, Davis' findings support a multifaceted view of empathy (a single construct with multiple components).

Barrett-Lennard (1981) described what he termed that Empathy Cycle. This model involved the following steps between the "Em" (empathizing person) and the "Ex" (person expressing situation/need). He divided the process of empathy into phases. Phase 1: Empathic resonance by Em after Ex has expressed his/her need or explained his/her situation; Phase 2: Expressed empathy by Em (directly or indirectly); Phase 3: Received Empathy--Em expresses in a communicative way (behavioral) that he/she is aware of Ex's situation; Phase 4: Ex is aware of Em's understanding of him/her; Phase 5: Feedback, fresh resonance and the Ex continues self-expression so that also carries feedback to Em. Though Phase 1 is unclear (the process of resonance is unexplained), this theory again supports the view that empathy has multiple components in that

empathy involves at the least, cognitive and behavioral aspects of empathy in the expression, reception and awareness (Phase 4) of the described empathic process.

Theodore Reik (from Katz, 1963) developed a model of Empathic Understanding. This involved identification (loss of self-awareness in becoming absorbed in other's experience), incorporation (taking in experience of other as opposed to projecting our own experience on them), reverberation (what is familiar to us in the experience of another), and detachment (distancing our subjective involvement to use reason and logic to place our understanding in perspective). Viewed from a cognitive/affective/behavioral perspective, several of these steps could involve affective (i.e., incorporation) or behavioral (i.e., reverberation) responses. Nonetheless, empathy is still portrayed as a singular construct with several aspects.

Thus, all the above models support a cognitive/affective/behavioral combination view of empathy involving communication and validation of feelings of the other, in contrast to earlier conceptualizations of empathy as merely "feeling" or "understanding" the others' situation.

Correlates of Empathy

In order to fully understand what empathy is and its' subsequent potential in psychological research, the characteristics and behaviors related to empathy need to be addressed. Different studies will enlighten the reader to possible mediators, moderators, and the various qualities that research has found to be associated with empathy. Reviewing the correlates of empathy should provide significant guidance in understanding this construct and indicating future avenues of research.

Self-Esteem

As previously mentioned, in Davis' study (1979; 1983), greater Perspective Taking (PT, one aspect of his empathy measure) was positively related to measures of self-esteem for males and females and negatively related to shyness, loneliness, and fearfulness.

In contrast, the Personal Distress subscale (PD) was most strongly related (greater than $-.53$) to all of the above measures. Specifically, higher PD and lower self-esteem were consistently related to greater fearfulness, more shyness, social anxiety, and loneliness across gender.

Ability and Achievement

Davis (1979), utilizing psychology undergraduates ($n > 1000$), did *not* find significant relationships between self-rated empathy scores and SAT scores, though *teacher empathy* has been related to student achievement in the form of exam scores in college students and sixth grader students (Wager, 1969 in Karlin, 1990 and Robinson, Wilson and Robinson, 1978) and minorities (Scheuer, 1971). Another study of teacher empathy that touched on the more interpersonal effects of the construct involved 10,000 elementary and secondary students with highly empathic teachers. These students with empathic teachers showed improvement in reading, self-concept scores and fewer absences, disciplinary problems and acts of vandalism (Aspy & Roebuck, 1977). Thus, in an educational setting, teacher empathy and student achievement might be related.

Davis (1979) also found that the Perspective-Taking (P-T) subscale of his empathy measure positively correlated with the Work and Mastery subscales and negatively with the Competitiveness subscale of the Work and Family Orientation questionnaire. Helmreich and colleagues (Helmreich, Spence, Beane, Lucker & Matthews, 1980; Helmreich, Bean, Lucker, and Spence, 1978) found that achievement (number of citations) for psychologists, scientists and engineers also positively correlated with the Work and Mastery subscales and negatively correlated with the Competitiveness subscales. Thus, Davis reasoned, his P-T subscale could potentially relate to achievement or success in one's field.

Work Performance, Commitment, Absenteeism

Karlin (1990), in his study of 259 drug-store employees (27 departmental heads and 232 hourly employees; 78% female) found that *PME (perceived managerial empathy)*, across the total sample, was more strongly related to organizational commitment than performance ratings or the need for empathy. Committed employees *also* tended to have positive performance appraisals, fewer absences and were more likely to be at the higher level of the organization. Thus, though other variables may contribute to the commitment of employees at a higher status (e.g., greater rewards), the results here also raise the possibility that a positive relationship could exist between workplace status and a need for empathy.

Consideration

Empathy, as defined by the ability of a supervisor to predict an employees' personality test scores, was found to be significantly and positively related to the supervisors' scores on a measure of *consideration* (Fleishman & Salter, 1963). Defined

in this manner, this study could also be perceived as measuring the cognitive component of empathy. Based on these findings, empathy could potentially be related to productivity as research investigating consideration has demonstrated the positive influence of a humanistic managerial style (in which consideration is a factor) on group productivity (Katz & Kahn, 1951 and 1952; Katz, Maccoby, Gurin, & Floor, 1951) as well as individually (Trieb & Marion, 1969, in Karlin, 1990).

Summary

To summarize, empathy has been conceptualized in many ways, either as a multifaceted construct or a process that involves multiple steps. Studies have found correlations between empathy and self-esteem, productivity, student achievement, scientific achievement, worker commitment and potentially productivity (if consideration can be subsumed under empathy). These results indicate potential avenues of future research such as further exploration of the relationship between empathy and consideration as well as empathy's association with other personality characteristics (e.g., self-esteem). Thus far, empathy appears to be a construct related to desirable characteristics and behavior.

An investigation of empathy and consideration would constitute an exploration of the definition of empathy itself, which has been the focus of much of the literature on the construct. Valid research in this area would involve a stringent definition of empathy and a comparison to proposed related constructs, such as consideration. An externally valid criterion (e.g., productivity) should also be included. A study of the relationship between empathy and productivity in the workplace, for instance, could serve as a means of further elucidating the components of the construct as well as what it is related to.

This would be an applicable and practical finding and likely to generate interest in future endeavors. At the very least, the findings for empathy thus far indicate the potential of a construct once solely applied to therapeutic situations.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Clinical Roots

With Titchener's (1909 in Duan & Hill, 1996) focus on empathy as a projection of oneself into the other, his conceptualization of empathy lacked both an awareness of self or mental comprehension until Mead (1934) distinguished between the self and other in his definition and added the cognitive element of perspective taking. Clinical definitions have ranged from "as if one were aware of the other person" (Rogers, 1959, p. 210 in Duan & Hill, 1996), "feeling in" (Downey, 1929, p. 176 in Duan & Hill, 1996) and "vicarious introspection" (Kohut, 1971, 1977) to entering the internal world of another (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967) and "transposing oneself into the thinking, feeling, and acting of another" (Dymond, 1950, p. 344 in Duan & Hill, 1996).

Developmental/clinical models of empathy also include Hoffman's (1982) steps to reach empathy: reactive newborn cry, classical conditioning, accumulation of painful memories/experiences, mimicry, and symbolic association. Feshbach's similar model (see Goldstein and Michaels, 1985) included the child's ability to identify the emotional state of another, then to assume the viewpoint of the other, etc. Hoffman also related his model of empathy development as crucial to the development of morality.

Both psychoanalysts (Kohut, 1977) and humanists (Rogers, 1959 in Duan and Hill, 1996) initially regarded empathy as either a cure or a necessary condition for psychological change. Other researchers found the empathic qualities of the counselor to be associated with level of psychotherapeutic outcomes (see Hornblow, 1980). Freud (1921 in Hornblow, 1980) linked empathy with the process of identification and adaptive

regression. From a Jungian perspective, Fordham (1972) regarded the therapist's ability to empathize as his/her "effective knowledge of the archetypal experience in the patients' material" (p. 20). However, the support of empathy as a cure or necessary condition in therapy has become debatable. Some inconsistent research results have been reported and some have concluded that empathy in itself is not sufficient for successful therapeutic outcomes except in very specific situations and perhaps for only milder disorders (see Duan & Hill for a review, 1996).

Findings from Developmental and Social Psychology

Eisenberg, Wentzel, and Harris (1998) reviewed the role of emotionality and regulation in empathy-related responding. They listed several concepts and constructs involved with *empathy-related responding* from the developmental and social psychological literature including cognitive perspective taking (understanding another by cognitively placing oneself in the other's situation); dispositional emotional intensity (the variance of emotional intensity among individuals); dispositional empathy, sympathy, or personal distress (the variance of these constructs between individuals), emotional regulation (neurophysiological regulation and control of one's internal state, attentional, and perceptual processes); empathy (feeling the experience of another and also responding affectively); personal distress (aversive emotional reaction to vicariously experiencing the other's situation); situational empathy, sympathy, or personal distress ("state" empathic responding); sympathy as an affective response that likely stems from empathic sadness that involves feelings of sorrow for another; and vicarious emotion (emotion provoked by the cues of another's emotions). Contrary to other authors, Eisenberg, Wentzel, and Harris see empathy as a prerequisite for sympathy and thus, the

findings they site for sympathy they also treat as findings for empathy. The review addressed the relationships among the above-mentioned concepts in the current literature.

Emotionality

Eisenberg, Wentzel et al. overviewed studies that compared empathy-related responding to measures of emotionality. Adult studies were based on self-report measures while children studies were based on physiological or facial reactions. It was found that adults' self-reported emotional intensity was related to distress and sympathy. However, the general tendency to experience frequent *negative* emotions appears to be more strongly and positively correlated with personal distress and less strongly with sympathy. Initial evidence that adults' self-reported *positive* emotionality is related negatively to personal distress was also reported by Eisenberg, Wentzel et al. It could be surmised, therefore, that positive emotionality might be positively linked to sympathy.

Concerning studies with children, it appears that children who are frequently and intensely predisposed toward negative emotions are also low in sympathy. Children prone to personal distress also appear likely to experience negative emotions more often than their peers (Eisenberg, Wentzel, et al., 1998). Thus, empathy appears to be a positive emotional experience.

Emotional Regulation

In Eisenberg et al.'s review of studies of adults concerning relationships with measures of emotional regulation, strong evidence was found that adults who are prone to personal distress are low in regulation. Although there is some support for a positive association between regulation and sympathy, generally the findings are mixed.

Moreover, verbal and nonverbal expressions of personal distress or sympathy in certain

provocative situations tend to be related to low self-reported emotion regulation. In contrast, cognitive perspective taking has been consistently linked with measures of adults' regulation. Combined with Davis' similar findings regarding perspective taking, empathy seems related to generally positive functioning.

Eisenberg et al.'s review of studies with children found mixed findings, though they suggest that sympathetic children are well regulated and that interventions which encourage children's regulations are likely to increase their sympathy. Furthermore, children's sympathy seems to be predicted by a combination of individual differences in emotionality and regulation. That is, for children tending to have intense emotions (positive and negative), regulation is used for modulating that intensity. However, for children less prone to emotional reactions, regulation of *attention* may enhance the potential for helping others. In short, sympathetic children may tend to have better emotional regulation than their less sympathetic peers.

Empathy and Social Skills

Finally, the Eisenberg, Wentzel, et al. review addressed the relationship between sympathy/empathy and the capacity for social skills for children. In the above-cited studies, children who were sympathetic appeared to be fairly strong in their social skills. The authors surmised that it is likely that sympathetic responding, socially competent behavior and low problem behavior are all partially an outcome of children's abilities to manage their emotions in optimal ways. Thus, individual differences in regulation and perhaps in dispositional emotionality may contribute to several aspects of children's socioemotional competencies. Furthermore, they reasoned that it could be possible for social skills training programs or other interventions that emphasize children's

understanding and control of emotion to contribute to the development of sympathy and empathy.

Overall, research concerning the cognitive aspect of empathy indicates it is positively related to emotional regulation for adults. In children, emotional regulation appears to be a necessary precursor to attaining empathy/sympathy. Thus far, the literature on empathy portrays the construct as a positive characteristic, relating to confidence, general maturity and harmony with others.

Distinctions Between Sympathy and Empathy

Given the above assumption and the common linkage of the two words in everyday language, sympathy and empathy will now be addressed. Lauren Wispe (1986) defined sympathy as the heightened *awareness* of and need to alleviate another's suffering. Sympathy not only intensifies the objective elements of the person's situation, but also the subjective, internal elements. Empathy, the author distinguished, refers to the attempt by a self-aware individual to nonjudgementally understand the positive and negative experiences of another, relying on imaginative and mimetic skills, similar to the cognitive aspect of empathy. With sympathy, the concern is communion, Wispe claimed, while accuracy is the focus of empathy. Another distinction is that self-awareness is reduced in sympathy, but heightened in empathy. This reduced self-awareness in sympathy may be due to the high emotional involvement with the experience of the other. In sum, Wispe stated that "The object of empathy is to 'understand' the other person. The object of sympathy is the other person's 'well-being'" (p. 318), indicating that she views empathy in a purely cognitive light and sympathy from a more behavioral perspective.

Although this is a good attempt to separate the two terms, it is not as comprehensive as it needs to be. Wispe did not fully address whether it would appear that empathy could focus on both understanding and the person's well being or that sympathy might be a prelude to empathy or vice-versa. Furthermore, I disagree with her conceptualization of empathy and in general regard empathy as a much more in-depth experience than sympathy. I would argue that sympathy is perhaps that initial, base reaction one has to another's emotional or difficult situation and that empathy would involve a much further extension of oneself into the world of the other, in stark contrast to Wispe's claim that empathy is more self-focused. I would agree that empathy involves understanding the other, but that it *also* involves experiencing the emotions of the other and possibly acting on these thoughts and feelings as well, again in contrast to Wispe.

Other authors have different perspectives on the empathy/sympathy distinction: Ehmann (1971) maintained that sympathy's major elements of condolence, pity, and/or agreement are not found in empathy. Bucheimer (1963) described empathy as a convergence of two individuals and sympathy as merely feeling 'alongside' another and Katz (1963) described empathy as a focus on the particular context of the other while sympathy only heightened one's awareness of one's own feelings. Katz's definition is in particular contrast with Wispe's seemingly altruistic "other" focus in the experience of sympathy.

Further Findings in Social Psychology

Attribution Theory

Other studies in the social psychological literature have found empathy related to the fundamental attribution error (Regan & Totten, 1975; Galper, 1976; Gould & Sigall,

1977; Davis, 1979). Davis (1979) compared his measure of empathy (which included the factors Fantasy, Perspective Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), and Personal Distress (PD) to a questionnaire assessing attributions. The FAE involves always attributing the behavior of others to their internal nature. This is also called a “developmental” attribution as opposed to a “situational” attribution, which indicates that the environment is responsible for the behavior. However, the occurrence of the FAE is relative. For instance, in addition to being prevalent in Western nations, it occurs mostly when judging others as opposed to oneself and is also more likely to occur when someone lacks the time to make a more informed decision (Tavris & Wade, 1997).

When the Empathic Concern (EC) subscale of Davis’ previously described empathy measure was compared to occurrence of the FAE, overall, higher levels of EC were more associated with situational attributions. Perspective Taking (PT) was also positively related to situational attributions. Thus, the better one is at taking another’s perspective or being concerned with the others’ welfare, the less likely to make the FAE.

The experiments involved subjects watching a video of a male (target) trying to impress a female and were then divided into two conditions: one in which subjects were instructed to merely observe, the other in which they were instructed to empathize with the target. Concerning the quality of the target’s evaluation, greater EC was associated with more situational attributions when the target was negatively evaluated and more dispositional attributions when positively evaluated. Thus, the more empathetically concerned subjects demonstrated a self-serving bias in relation to the target: positive outcomes were attributed internally, but negative outcomes were attributed externally.

A couple of gender effects also occurred. Across both conditions, a gender difference emerged depending on the quality of the target's evaluation. When the target received a negative evaluation, men continued to show the positive EC-situational scores, whereas women showed the reverse (higher EC resulted in more dispositional attributions). However, another gender difference occurred based on the type of attribution across both instruction conditions. EC and Personal Distress (PD) were "strongly and positively" related to women making dispositional attributions in Davis' study (1979). That is, those women who were high in PD also showed a strong positive relationship between their EC scores and their tendency to attribute the male target's behavior to his disposition. Therefore, PD, at least for women, could be moderating attributional styles. To elaborate, while the more empathic men tend to attribute a target's behavior to the situation regardless of the quality of the behavior, women might be more prone to such external attributions only when they are low on PD.

It may be worthy to note, though, that Davis' results might be colored by the nature of the experiment, which involved a *male* target trying to *please* a female. For example, one reason that empathetically concerned women may have made more dispositional attributions when the male target was negatively evaluated is because they were identifying with the female. They might have felt that to situationally attribute a negative evaluation was to place the responsibility on the female.

Concerning the findings for the presence or absence of empathy instructions, when specifically instructed to empathize, the greater the PD score, the more likely subjects were to make situational attributions for both males and females. Thus, adding specific instructions to empathize make PD a moderator for both sexes. It could be

deduced that when people with high anxiety are consciously engaged in being empathic, they reduce their anxiety by making external attributions, alleviating the target of any personal responsibility. That is, distressed people might do this in labeling their own behavior and therefore would generalize this to others as well.

Other studies have demonstrated similar results concerning the empathy-attribution relationship (Regan & Totten, 1975; Galper, 1976; Gould & Sigall, 1977) such that when subjects were instructed to empathize, their attributions were more situational, avoiding the fundamental attribution error (FAE). Lacking instructions, the subjects have committed the FAE, which means that they attributed the outcomes to dispositional qualities. Each study similarly defined empathy as imagining how the person feels or putting oneself in the place of the target, which could involve both affective and cognitive components of empathy. While Regan and Totten, along with Galper's studies, supported such findings, an interesting addition emerged with Gould and Sigall's study based only on women: instructions to empathize led to dispositional attributions for *success* and situational attributions for *failure*. Of course, due to the fact that Gould and Sigall's subjects were all women, their results cannot be related to gender. Furthermore, their study allowed for two kinds of outcomes (good and bad), while only one outcome (which could be construed as on the positive side) was present in the Galper study. However, by comparing the results to Davis' findings, it could be suggested that perhaps the women in Gould and Sigall study were less personally distressed.

Helping

Other social psychology experiments have found that empathy facilitates helping. Taking a cognitive/emotional approach to empathy, Coke, Batson, and McDavis (1978)

had male and female subjects listen to a radio newscast of a tragic situation. The subjects were instructed to either imagine the target's condition, specifically how it made the target feel (the emotional condition) and how it affected the target's life (the cognitive condition). This "imagine" situation constituted the empathy condition. A comparison condition involved only observation of the broadcasting techniques. The subjects were then solicited to volunteer time to help the target. As predicted, the subjects in the empathic condition offered more help than the subjects in the observation condition.

In a similar experiment that made use of Davis' empathy scale (1979), Davis found that subjects instructed to empathize also offered more help as a function of their PT scores. While EC was also related to helping, it only contributed when subjects were also high on fantasizing ability. Thus, PT has been shown to contribute to the avoidance of the FAE as well as offering assistance.

Other studies have shown that empathy is causally related to prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987) and altruistic behavior, though, in slight contrast to Davis' findings of helping being conditionally offered, help by highly empathic subjects in altruistic studies remained consistent regardless whether the escape condition was easy or difficult (Batson & Coke, 1981; Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley and Birch, 1981; Batson, Dyck, Brandt, Batson, Powell et al., 1988; Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Banderplas and Isen, 1983).

Physiological Studies of Empathy

An additional component of the previously mentioned Coke et al. study (1978) was the effect of arousal on helping behavior by having subjects either ingest an arousal-inducing drug or by giving false-arousal feedback to subjects through a galvanic skin

response monitor. When arousal was attributed to empathic concern for the target, it significantly contributed to helping. Therefore, it appears that arousal can influence empathy if it is labeled as contributing to the empathic response.

Another study by Levenson and Reuf (1992) investigated the relationship between empathic *accuracy* and heart rate, skin conductance, and general somatic activity. Their research involved correlating self-report empathy ratings to self/other ratings of video interactions with simultaneous physiological monitoring. Subjects were married couples and rated 15-minute videos of their own interactions (of a designated spouse) while being physiologically monitored. The videos consisted of two conversations. While viewing the segments, subjects continuously indicated on a 9-point scale, from very negative to very positive, how they were feeling during the interaction. They then rated how they thought their spouse reacted. Rating accuracy was determined by comparing subject's ratings with identical self-ratings obtained previously from the target spouse. The authors considered this rating dial to be a measure of empathy, but also required subjects to fill out Mehrabian and Epstein's empathy scale (1972) as well as the empathy subscale from the California Personality Inventory (CPI). Though no relationship emerged between the empathy scale of the CPI and rating accuracy, high scores on the Mehrabian-Epstein empathy scale were associated with greater rating accuracy for *positive* affect only during the *second* conversation. However, in general, the greater the physiological similarity between subject and target, the greater the accuracy of the subject's rating of the target's *negative* affect.

The authors point out that if a component of empathy is the ability to discern how the other is feeling, then these self-report measures are lacking. However, this comment

does not seem to take into account that the self-report scale was somewhat related to accuracy with positive affect and the physiological similarity was related to accuracy with negative affect. The self-report questionnaires and the rating dial could also be measuring two different aspects of empathy. Empathy may have both cognitive and emotional components that are captured in the scale as well as the physiological linkage. Using either alone could result in seeing only part of the puzzle. Furthermore, the small number of subjects (31) in this study make the findings somewhat tenuous.

Another study investigating empathic accuracy involved a more complex rating procedure (written thoughts and feelings) of video-taped interactions (Ickes, Stinson, Bissonnette, & Garcia, 1990) and Davis' Interpersonal Reactivity Index (1983), his self-report measure of empathy based on his dissertation work previously discussed (1979). Both content and emotional tone accuracy were compared for the subjects. Neither Davis' measure nor the written thoughts and feelings were found to be significantly related to content or emotional accuracy, though content accuracy was influenced by such factors as physical attractiveness of one's partner and self-monitoring. Thus, combined with the above study, it might suggest that self-report measures of empathy are not completely capturing the ability to understand how another is thinking or feeling. The complexity of a construct such as empathy could also contribute to these mixed findings. Again, as in the Levenson & Reuf study, established self-report measures could very well be measuring different aspects of empathy than are assumed in these studies.

Summary

In sum, though empathy has been positively related to positive therapeutic outcomes in the clinical literature, it is no longer regarded as a solely sufficient element

for all therapeutic situations. It is perhaps useful in only very specific therapeutic situations or with particular client disorders. In social psychology studies, both children and adults who experience significant personal distress appear to be low in empathy and emotional regulation, though associations between sympathy and emotional regulation are mixed. Cognitive perspective taking, however, has often been linked to adult emotional regulation, though findings with children are not clear. Children who are sympathetic, however, do seem to have stronger social skills than those who are not or are less so. Personal distress also appears to moderate emotional regulation. Regarding the fundamental attribution error, subjects who are specifically instructed to empathize tend to avoid this error and make more situational attributions, though this tendency appears to be potentially moderated by personal distress (PD). Empathizing subjects are also more likely to offer help to another in need. Lastly, the findings in the physiological studies regarding empathy are mixed, but overall self-report questionnaires have not fared well. This could be due to the fact that they are not capturing all the elements of empathy or are measuring different aspects than the other non self-report measures. However, Davis' measure (1979) has a strong validation background. Therefore, the results must be regarded as inconclusive.

CHAPTER V

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMPATHY

An extensive review of gender differences in empathy was conducted by Eisenberg and Lennon (1983). Regarding self-reported empathy in reaction to emotional situations, they concluded that there was a tendency for females to report more empathic reactions than males in response to the simulated emotional states of others. However, the authors cautioned that such results could not be conclusive because, they stated, "self-report measures frequently are not consistent with other measures of empathic responding" (p. 111) and this has also been noted in reviewing the literature on empathy thus far.

While Eisenberg and Lennon did not find any significant gender differences attributed to empathy in physiological measures of empathic responding (e.g., heart rate or skin conductance reactions to supposedly empathy-evoking conditions), the authors did find differences in the facial, vocal and gestural measures of empathy. That is, females exhibited more nonverbal indications of empathy (particularly vocal affect), especially when it was obvious that empathy is the construct being measured. This could be attributed to the fact that empathy is a culturally approved trait for women in America. However, regarding the lack of differentiation in physiological measures, it is dubious as to whether heart rate, GSR (Galvanic Skin Response) or pulse rate can justifiably even represent an empathic reaction. Any one of those physiological reactions could represent a range of emotions.

Concerning responses to self-report scales, in particular Mehrabian and Epstein's (1972), females overwhelmingly obtained significantly higher empathy scores.

Especially for adults, the sex differences were strongly significant in empathy, with a mean effect size (that is, independent of sample size) of .99.

With teacher and peer-report measures (performed in only two studies listed in Eisenberg and Lennon), the highly significant findings indicated that teachers and peers viewed females as much more empathic than males. However, other studies of empathy involving less traditional measures (e.g., classification of children's responses to the distress of others; interviewing children on moral reasoning) did not demonstrate clear evidence of sex differences in the tendency to empathize, though all these studies were focused on children. Thus again, it is implied that perhaps self-report measures of empathy and non-traditional measures of the construct are capturing different aspects or types of empathy.

Eisenberg and Lennon also reviewed the literature related to affective role taking which would highly correspond to a common definition of empathy (or at least a part of empathy, like Davis' Perspective Taking). Overall, although women appeared to be more skilled than men at decoding visual overt nonverbal cues, there were relatively few consistent sex differences in children's affecting role-taking abilities. Thus, perhaps empathy develops over time and is therefore most evident in adults.

Summary

Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) summarized their research by concluding that "sex differences in empathy are highly related to the method of assessing empathy" (p.119). While gender differences favoring females emerged the strongest from self-report measures, few sex differences were found when empathy was assessed with non-obtrusive measures such as physiological and facial/gestural measures. I would also point

out that the inconsistencies in the literature have emerged more often with children than adults, perhaps indicating that more socialization is needed to occur before significant sex differences emerge. That is, the findings for empathy in children thus far could indicate that empathy is a significantly socialized construct.

CHAPTER VI

EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

The functioning of the workplace relies heavily on the interpersonal relations among its employees (Karlin, 1990). One study (see Karlin, 1990) found that 80% of upper level workers ("decision-makers") spent their time in face-to-face communication and based 88% of their decisions on these communications. Empathy, in turn, has been found to foster good communication flow in effective decision-making (Boyd, 1985; Farrant, 1977) in addition to encouraging independent problem-solving (Catt & Miller, 1985; Buckman, 1984; Baker & Gorman, 1978). It would be difficult to conceive of face-to-face communications that pertained to important issues *not* involving the ability to see another's viewpoint, at the most basic level. Thus, such findings are one justification for the exploration of empathy in the workplace, a construct that can potentially affect interpersonal effectiveness.

Other studies have provided additional justification for empathy in the workplace by supporting the role of manager as counselor (Buckman, 1984; Bolyard, 1983; Golen & Sykora, 1983; Farber, 1982; Baker & Gorman, 1978). Research in Clinical Psychology has proposed a that a need for an empathic connection between employees and their managers is quite natural based on self/other psychology, the parent-child relationship, and related findings (Wolf, 1988, in Karlin, 1990; Kohut, 1984; Lichtenberg, Bornstein & Silver, 1984; Smith & Pederson, 1983; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1979; Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974; Kanungo, 1982; Seeman, 1975). Empathy in particular, among other qualities, has also been found to transcend differences in clinical training, philosophical orientation, context and client characteristics (Truax & Mitchell, 1971).

Specifically, if empathy could transcend differences in one setting (therapy), it could potentially transcend them in another (workplace), particularly from the viewpoint of 'manager as counselor.' Based on all of these findings, empathy would appear to be a useful characteristic for a manager. Likewise, Tannenbaum, Weschler and Massarik (1961, in Karlin, 1990) also agree that a clinical/empathic approach to dealing with employees can have a strong influence on workplace functioning. I agree as well, though the usefulness of an empathic approach is likely to differ according to the industry and particular situation.

In Karlin's study (1990), the perceived level of managerial empathy (PME) was significantly, albeit moderately ($r=.26$, $p<.001$) related to the general employee's total score on the performance ratings. However, PME appeared to differentiate somewhat according to status in that Karlin found a substantial correlation between PME and performance ratings for department heads ($r=.58$, $p<.001$) as opposed to hourly employees ($r=.21$, $p<.01$). Across the total sample, organizational commitment correlated positively and significantly ($r=.33$, $p<.001$) with PME. Other researchers feel that using empathy, among other "counseling" techniques, most effectively deals with psychological factors that influence worker performance (Frunzi & Dunn, 1974).

Ikemi & Kubota (1996) found that those workers who tended to perceive their managers as higher on empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness correspondingly rated lower for depression, anxiety, and fatigue. Of course, like most correlational data, this finding could be also have emerged because those who are less depressed to begin with have a more positive view of their superiors. The finding that the

attitude of one's superiors/managers is related to employee satisfaction and adjustment has been demonstrated by others (Fiedler, 1967)

Furthermore, Karlin's 1990 study found that employees (department heads and hourly employees across several stores) rated the *need for empathy* from their immediate manager as between important and very important (the highest rating) (mean value 3.42, s.d., .65) (Karlin, 1990). In a similar vein, Cooper (1978) surveyed over 160 companies and found that a majority of employees at these companies had grievances about their companies' lack of respect and willingness to address employee problems. Concerning this latter study, the companies' disregard for employees could be construed as lacking in empathy. The findings imply that the employees want to be understood, showing a need for an aspect of empathy similar to Davis' Perspective Taking subscale (the cognitive aspect of empathy).

Other research cites that the "best-run" companies, with examples from such large, well-known companies as Hewlett-Packard, Wal-Mart and Delta Airlines, are those that invest substantially in respecting and responding to their employees' needs (Peters & Waterman, 1982), the latter of which could be viewed as a behavioral aspect of empathy (actively addressing needs of the other). Other studies cite that identifying with employees on an empathic level can help a manager grasp an employee's potential (Massarick, 1969). The influence of managers on their employees' morale and adjustment has also been documented (Albrecht, 1982; Albrecht & Adelman, 1984; Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). Tracy (1979), in turn, holds that managers who lack sensitivity can create unnecessary problems that affect morale and productivity.

As few studies exist that directly study empathy in the workplace, it might be helpful to address constructs that are potentially related to empathy and have been investigated in the workplace. From a behavioral perspective, supportiveness could be viewed as a part of empathy. That is, the behavioral manifestation of appreciating/relating to another's situation could result in the expression of this appreciation and thus, be perceived as a sign of supportiveness. Therefore, it could be that expressed empathy is commonly perceived as a supportive gesture. Studies that have shown organizations perceived as supportive also have lower absenteeism rates and more committed and satisfied employees (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1984). If supportiveness can be construed as part of empathy, these studies are significant findings for the potential of empathy in the workplace. Davis (1972) also cites findings of significant positive correlations between work-group performance and satisfaction with supportive managerial styles (see Smith, 1986; Indik, Georgopoulos & Seashore 1961; Wager, 1965 all in Karlin).

Inconsistent Findings in the Workplace: Future Research Potential

In Karlin's study (1990), the perceived level of managerial empathy was significantly, albeit moderately ($r=.26$, $p<.001$) related to the employee's total score on the performance ratings. However, the more empathic manager might be a more lenient rater. This kind of problem needs to be avoided by perhaps relying less on ratings and instead employing more objective measures of performance (e.g., number of promotions in past two years).

Karlin also found an *inverse relationship* between productivity and perceived managerial empathy (PME), which may be due to the method of measurement (total sales

divided by total payroll for each store). Such a finding could also indicate different implications for empathy depending on the level of the job. Research has shown that managerial personnel place a higher importance on intrinsic needs than workers at a lower level (Baril & Reavy, 1984; Porter, 1961 and Hill & Hunt, 1973). What does this say about the influence of empathy on people of different status? Like Karlin's other findings, this finding about productivity might be related to a difference between upper and lower-level workers that is not distinguished by this measure of productivity.

Karlin also did not investigate how important empathy is relative to other needs and motivators (pay, position, status) or context as far as what conditions/situations in which empathy might be most relevant. For instance, he states that "there exist no known situations in which empathy would be detrimental" p.111), but logically, there are situations in which too much or too little empathy is inappropriate, such as in emergency room situations in which doctors and nurses need to act with more expediency than empathy. Similarly, in business situations, acting in a no-nonsense manner can be more effective than showing empathy in situations requiring decisive action. Also, perhaps certain aspects/types of empathy (high or low cognitive, affective, or behavioral) work best at different times. Some workers might be more receptive to a cognitive aspect of empathy, whereas others respond better to something more demonstrative and blatant like the behavioral side of empathy. Again, the type of situation is bound to influence the effectiveness of the aspect/level of empathy as well.

The specific behaviors involved in empathy in the workplace also remain unclear. Karlin himself raised the following question: what exactly is involved or not involved in the behavior of managers that employees perceive to be empathic? Furthermore,

empathy's relationship with job performance also needs a more direct investigation, instead of relying solely on findings of supportiveness. Karlin also questioned how empathy could combine with other traits to affect worker performance as well as mediate or moderate performance variables. The inconsistencies in his own study and the questions Karlin has raised all indicate useful avenues of research for the purpose of establishing the role of empathy in the workplace.

Summary

In summary, research on empathy in the workplace indicates that workers are potentially healthier, happier (in terms of satisfaction, commitment, morale) and possibly perform better when dealing with empathic-like superiors and/or working in an empathic-related environment. The findings for empathy related to interpersonal effectiveness also have implications for affecting workplace transactions among coworkers and, perhaps through future investigations, customer service. It also appears from Karlin's research that a higher status or position at work is more positively associated with a need for empathy. Future studies should explore status as related to a need for empathy using multiple measures (self-report and behavioral and/or affective assessment tools). The inconsistencies in the research also support using multiple measures in order to understand empathy's different aspects or distinguish between different types of empathy, in addition to verifying the usefulness of empathy in different contexts and the behaviors this construct might mediate or moderate.

CHAPTER VII

MEASURES OF EMPATHY

Historically, empathy has been measured utilizing a variety of projective and clinical instruments, such as the Rorschach Test, the Thematic Apperception Test, the Role Construct Repertory Test, the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory), CPI (California Personality Inventory), along with rating scales and multiple-choice responses to video-taped interviews (Hornblow, 1980). The Empathy Test (Kerr, 1947; Kerr & Speroff, 1954), which involved the ability to take the perspective of another, was among the early attempts at creating empathy measures and has been perceived as very questionable in its viability (Hall, 1965; Thorndike, 1959). This was followed by the Accurate Empathy measure (Dymond, 1949; Dymond, 1950 in Duan & Hill, 1996) which measured the ability to predict the response of another in which subjects interacted for a specified period of time and then completed questionnaires on personality traits (self ratings/other ratings/ratings of how the others rated themselves/how they might have been rated by the others). Their score was calculated by how accurately they estimated the others' self-ratings as well as the other members' ratings of the targeted subject. The difference between the subject's estimates of another's ratings and the actual ratings made by that member was then taken to yield two deviation scores (correct prediction of other's self-ratings and one's own ratings by others; see details in Davis, 1979).

Davis (1979) and others have criticized this type of measure's validity (Hastorf & Bender, 1952; Bender & Hastorf, 1953; Cronbach, 1955), pointing out the problems that could arise if two people have a similar response style. Chapin's Social Insight Test

(Chapin, 1942) and Cassel's (Cassel, 1959) Social insight scales were other early measures of empathy that have also been criticized for either being too broad in their conceptualization of empathy or their methodology has yielded questionable reliability and validity (Borden, 1960; Black, 1965)

Truax and Barrett-Lennard Scales

Empathy studies began to flourish in the 1960's, beginning with the Truax (1961) and Barrett-Lennard (1962) empathy scales. Though widely used, the Truax scale has been criticized for its unreliability and invalidity (Rappaport & Chinsky, 1972). However, the Empathic Understanding scale of Barrett-Lennard's Relationship Inventory (1962, 1978), which involves ratings of 1-6 on a series of statements about another, has demonstrated significant predictive validity with client/therapist outcomes (Gurman, 1977), though seemingly low applicability outside a therapeutic situation (see Karlin, 1990).

The Hogan Empathy Scale

The Hogan Empathy Scale (1969), a self-report measure drawn mainly from the MMPI and CPI, although popular, has not demonstrated impressive reliability and validity (Cross and Sharpley, 1982; Johnson, Smither & Cheek, 1983). It appears broad in scope, appearing to measure overall interpersonal effectiveness and generally not discrete enough to capture empathy. Johnson, Smither and Cheek's study (1983) demonstrated how this scale captures interpersonal effectiveness in so far as it correlates highly with sociability ($r=.50$), adjustment ($r=.48$), social self-confidence ($r=.64$), and nonconformity ($r=.68$) in addition to other similar personality measures. Another cause

for concern was that the Hogan scale appeared more valid for males (Chlopan, McCain, Carbonell & Hagen, 1985).

The Mehrabian-Epstein Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy

The Mehrabian-Epstein Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy (QMME) emerged in 1972 and contains subscales of Susceptibility to Emotional Change; Appreciation of the Feelings of Unfamiliar and Distant Others; Extreme Emotional Responsiveness; Tendency To Be Moved by Others' Positive Emotional Experiences; Tendency To Be Moved by Others' Negative Emotional Experiences; Sympathetic Tendency; and Willingness To Be in Contact with Others Who Have Problems. It has had mixed results in validation studies. One criticism is that the authors did not attempt to differentiate between the type of emotional responses, but only assessed a "global" emotionality score. Chlopan et al (1985) reviewed studies utilizing the QMME and summarized that high scorers tend to be more socially aware, as well as more helpful (see also Davis, 1979, 1983) and morally advanced, indicating that the QMME might have Hogan's scope problem. Yet, Chlopan et al. pointed out that there was a low correlation between the QMME and Hogan. They reasoned that the QMME focused on vicarious emotional arousal and Hogan on role-taking ability, potentially two different aspects of empathy. It was also noted that while the Hogan appeared to be more valid for males, the QMME appeared to be more consistent for females than males. The QMME appears to be weak in predictive ability (Davis, 1979) and lacking in construct validity, though some of the subscales (e.g., Emotional Contagion, which was related to emotional empathy) might be useful (Dillard and Hunter, 1989).

Stotland et al.'s Empathy Scale

Stotland, Mathews, Sherman, Hansson and Richardson (1978) developed a measure of empathy that involved emotional reactions to diverse situations. This scale included five factors: Denial-Avoidance (unempathic responses), Involvement-Concern (tendency to imagine other's reactions), Hostility-Empathy (contrast to empathy), Friend-Empathy (empathizing with a friend's experiences), and Fantasy-Empathy (tendency to project oneself into characters in movies, books, plays). Only the Fantasy-Empathy subscale has been found to have a significant relationship to physiological arousal to another's emotions, on judgments of others and on ability to role-play (Stotland et al., 1978).

The Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised

The Jackson Personality Inventory-Revised (1994) was developed as a general purpose personality inventory and includes an Emotional subscale that incorporates Empathy, Anxiety, and Cooperativeness. While some reviewers have been highly critical of its reliability and validity (Pittenger, 1998), others have been less harsh and regard it to be as adequate as many other existing personality scales (Zachar, 1998). The significance of the Empathy portion of the subscale alone has yet to be reviewed.

Interpersonal Reactivity Index

Davis' (1979, 83) Interpersonal Reactivity Index conceptualized empathy as consisting of the following factors: Perspective-Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress subscales. The measure consists of four 7-item scales with alpha reliability estimates ranging from .68-.79, which is acceptable considering the few items in the subscales. The strongest correlations with other measures ($r > .30$, $p < .05$) have

been for Perspective-Taking ($r=.42$) and a correlation for the PD scale ($r=-.40$ only for females, though males still had a significant correlation of $r=-.25$) with Hogan's measure (see Johnson et al., 1983), and a correlation for the Fantasy and Empathic Concern scales with the Mehrabian-Epstein QMME ($r>.50$). Furthermore, although the PD subscale was a more valid predictor for females in Davis' dissertation work (1979), it was strongly and positively correlated across gender with measures of shyness, social anxiety and fearfulness and negatively with measures of self-esteem and positive emotionality in Davis' 1979 and 1983 studies. Dillard and Hunter (1989), recommend the IRI as an overall more valid scale than the QMME.

Regarding Davis' dissertation work with the other subscales, Perspective Taking positively correlated with high self-esteem (as well as negatively with fearfulness and shyness), avoidance of the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE) when making attributions about a target and helping when subjects were specifically instructed to empathize. The Empathic Concern subscale also demonstrated a considerable degree of construct validity with its' positive relationship to the F-scale (feminine) of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire across gender as well as being positively associated with a tendency to avoid the FAE and helping behavior.

Summary

Although the reviewed empathy measures overall have somewhat questionable reliability and validity, several *subscales* from different measures (e.g., Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking, Fantasy-Empathy, Emotional Contagion) did demonstrate some utility and potential for future use. The low intercorrelations between Dymond's scale, Hogan's, and Mehrabian and Epstein's scales indicate that either empathy is multi-

faceted (one construct with several aspects) or that there are discrete types of empathy (Kagan & Schneider, 1987 and Kurtz & Grummon, 1972). Based on the reviewed literature, it would appear to Davis (1979, 1983) as well as myself that empathy is a single construct that has multiple qualities. Again, research findings indicate that self-report and non-traditional measures of empathy (e.g., physiological, interviews) yield different results, prompting the usage of multiple methods to accurately capture empathy.

CHAPTER VIII

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE AND
FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN RESEARCH**Overview of Literature**

Empathy has been defined throughout the literature from cognitive and affective perspectives to combinations of cognitive, affective and behavioral perspectives. The combined cognitive/affective/behavioral definition has been the most pervasive. This multi-faceted definition involves understanding another's situation cognitively and affectively and frequently communicating this understanding. Parallel emotions are not always experienced, depending on the particular theorists' perspective. Based on the relevant literature that emphasizes a complexity of relationships and definitions associated with empathy, it is more likely that empathy is one construct with several cognitive/affective/behavioral facets than a construct that can be separated into distinct types. That is, an empathic individual is likely to have all three aspects of empathy, *though in varying degrees*, depending on the presence of other moderating/mediating characteristics. To illustrate, it's not that a hero does not experience the fear of the coward, but that the hero is able to conquer it.

Studies have shown empathy to be related to a number of positive characteristics. Direct or indirect correlations have been found between empathy and self-esteem, productivity, student achievement and worker commitment. Though constructs such as consideration have been proposed as related to empathy, this has yet to be validated, though logically it appears plausible.

An aspect of empathy research that is lacking concerns the validation of the construct in applied arenas. Empathy should be related to more external criteria, such as in studies of the workplace where such factors as productivity, job performance and coworker relations could be explored in relation to empathy.

Concerning the understanding of empathy to date, several moderators of empathy have been explored in the literature. Personal distress, for instance, appears to moderate empathy in adults and frequently women, though findings are confusing. In some studies, an inverse relationship exists between empathy or aspects of empathy (e.g., Perspective Taking) and personal distress. However, the relationship becomes less clear in studies of the relationship between attribution theory and empathy. In general, subjects who are more empathic tend to make more situational attributions and avoid making the fundamental attribution error, but when specifically instructed to empathize with a target, a positive relationship also emerges across gender between personal distress and situational attributions. Highly distressed subjects might feel that the most empathic reaction is to alleviate the target of responsibility by making an external/situational attribution for their behavior.

Measures of empathy have traditionally relied on self-report, though other methods have been employed. Physiological measures and other non-traditional measures appear to assess empathy differently from self-report methods, based on their respective low intercorrelations. Each method may be capturing a different type or aspect of empathy. Based on the findings relating different measures to personality characteristics, it would appear that empathy may indeed be a fairly broad concept that is

positively related to such characteristics as helpfulness, morality and self-esteem, though other personality variables likely moderate how empathy is individually expressed.

Concerning sex differences in empathy, research indicates that sex differences tend to be associated with method of measurement. While gender differences showing empathy to be more strongly and positively related to females emerged primarily from self-report measures, few sex differences were found when empathy was assessed with non-obtrusive measures such as physiological and facial/gestural measures. That very inconsistent sex differences have emerged repeatedly with studies of children more so than adults could also indicate that empathy is a significantly socialized construct.

Behaviors that empathy has been found to positively influence include helping and social skills. Concerning behaviors in the workplace, research indicates that employees tend to be more satisfied, potentially more productive or perform better when working with empathic superiors or in empathic (e.g., supportive, considerate) surroundings. A positive relationship between work status and a need for empathy also potentially exists, though further verification is needed.

Future Directions of Research

In order to more clearly understand empathy and what it is related to cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally, more applied and multi-method studies need to be pursued. Additionally, studies need to explore in what contexts empathy, or certain levels or types of empathy might be more advantageous or, in contrast, detrimental. Either Davis' (1983) Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), as it is the most rigorously constructed scale to date, or a new measure based on the few reliable and valid subscales of previous measures (including those of the IRI) should be used in further investigating this

construct. Future studies need to utilize self-report, personal descriptions, and possibly physiological or unobtrusive ratings to truly capture the complexity of this construct.

If any consensus on a definition of empathy exists, the multi-faceted view of empathy as a construct that has cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects has the most support. Using this comprehensive definition, empathy needs to be investigated in applied conditions in order to be a more useful construct in the field of psychology.

Karlin (1990) took the first step by measuring perceived empathy in the workplace. His study demonstrated the empathy is most important to upper-level workers in relation to their superiors, but generally important to hourly workers. Organizational commitment and performance ratings were more strongly related to departmental heads PME (Perceived Managerial Empathy) scores than those of the hourly employees, though significant correlations emerged for both groups. Self-report measures, if developed in a rigorous manner and combined with other methods, could also be used to assess the importance of empathy among coworkers or coworkers and customers. If such a measure could prove useful and demonstrate associations with work success or satisfaction, companies could use such a measure as a hiring tool. The establishment of an empathic measure as a hiring tool would demonstrate the utility and practical application of a construct once solely relegated to the therapeutic context.

CHAPTER IX

PROPOSAL TO STUDY EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE

Justification for Proposal

Though empathy has been historically defined from multiple perspectives, the most popular current definitions involve some combination of emotional, cognitive and affective perspectives (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Iannotti, 1979 in Davis, 1979; Kohut, 1984; Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Goldstein & Michaels, 1985; Macarov, 1978; Gladstein, 1977; Ickes, 1990; Karush, 1979; Levenson & Reuf, 1992; Basch, 1983; Feldstein & Gladstein, 1980). Concerning empathy's utility in different settings, the previous significance of the construct in the therapeutic context has recently been questioned (Duan & Hill, 1996) and other avenues have been explored, such as the workplace (Karlin, 1990).

Based on a variety of studies, the empathic individual would appear to have many positive characteristics such as being more helpful (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Davis, 1979; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987) and possibly regulating his/her emotions better than a non-empathic individual (Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1998). Studies have found empathy to be related to a number of positive characteristics including self-esteem (Davis, 1979), ability (Wager, 1969 in Karlin, 1990; Robinson, Wilson, & Robinson, 1978; Scheuer, 1971; Aspy & Roebuck, 1977), student achievement (Davis, 1979 and Helmreich et al., 1978 and 1980), workplace performance, commitment, low absenteeism (Karlin, 1990) and consideration (Fleishman & Salter, 1963).

The workplace is germane for the study of empathy. Karlin's (1990) study demonstrated a significant need for empathy between superiors and subordinates at a

certain status level, but it failed to address such questions as whether empathy is more important in some occupations than others and whether the level of empathy of the workers themselves were related to satisfaction or job involvement. Furthermore, addressing the role of empathy in customer-service orientation is also another promising but unexplored avenue of research in the workplace. The fact that empathy has been found to be related to interpersonal effectiveness (see Karlin, 1990) is a positive indicator for the potential relationship between customer-service orientation and empathy as well.

Accordingly, I investigated empathy in the context of the workplace. First, I developed a measure of empathy for the workplace. The extant measures of empathy that have reliable and valid subscales (e.g., Davis, 1979) are general in nature and may not be as relevant to work as a more specialized measurement of empathy. Along these lines, Schmit, Ryan, Stierwalt and Powell (1995) found that the validity of a general personality inventory for work settings was increased through contextualization of the items to work by simply adding "at work" to the scale statements. The present studies involved the contextualization of a measurement of empathy to the workplace by using items which refer to work behaviors, attitudes and relevant emotions.

Empathy Defined for the Workplace

Although many researchers have offered definitions and models of the empathic process (Levenson & Reuf, 1992; Feldstein & Gladstein, 1980; Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Reik in Katz, 1963), I chose a conceptual model of empathy that seemed to be the most comprehensive and prevalent in the literature, in addition to being the most work-applicable: the cognitive, affective and behavioral model (e.g., Basch, 1983; Davis 1979). In this model, empathy includes the ability to accurately appraise another's emotional

situation (cognitive aspect), be receptive to another person's needs (affective aspect) and respond to those needs (behavioral aspect). This conceptualization also specifies a lack of feeling "threatened" by the emotional needs of another and the avoidance of mistaking the others' needs for one's own. In Davis' terms, the lack of feeling threatened would translate into having a low level of personal distress. In short, an empathic person by this definition understands another's situation, experiences similar emotions to the other and responds to the needs manifested by the other. However, the empathizing individual does not confuse his/her feelings with the others' feelings and does not feel overwhelmed by the experience of the other.

Objectives of the Proposed Research

The first purpose of these studies was to develop a reliable measure of empathy which focused on the workplace and relationships among coworkers. As Stanley (1971) has noted, reliability is the essential first goal of any new measure. The empathy measure developed in this study will hereafter be referred to as Workplace Empathy (WE). The second purpose of these studies was to explore the construct validity of the WE measure.

Validity is a matter of degree and not something that is all or none (Messick, 1989). Messick defines validity as "an integrated evaluative judgement of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the *adequacy* and *appropriateness* and *actions* based on test scores or other modes of assessment" (1989, p. 1). He further defined construct validity as "based on any integration of evidence that bears on the interpretation or meaning of test scores" (1989, p. 7), concluding that "construct validity embraces almost all forms of validity evidence" (p. 8). Cronbach and Meehl (1955) note that construct validity is pursued when the construct lacks a "criterion

of universe of content [that] is accepted as entirely adequate to define the quality to be measured" (p.282). The current state of empathy research meets this criterion and thus construct validity of WE was a primary focus of this study.

Many types of validity are subsumed under construct validity (content validity, criterion-related validity, convergent/discriminant validity, etc.) and the present study could not address all of these. However, as an initial effort, these studies examined several different and important types of validity—including convergence of indicators, nomological validity, incremental validity, and known-group validity in an effort to elaborate the construct-validity of WE.

Whenever a new measure of a construct is developed, one of the first questions to be addressed is whether it is related to established measures of the construct. An important and related question is whether there is a "convergence of indicators," which refers to the extent to which assorted measures (indicators) of the same construct are related and display similar relational patterns (Messick, 1989). To this end, WE was correlated with an already established measure of empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) (Davis, 1980). Davis' IRI was chosen because it has demonstrated reasonable reliability and validity through comparisons with other measures (e.g., Hogan Empathy Scale, 1969; Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy, 1972) and behaviors (e.g., helping). Furthermore, Davis' measure is built on a comprehensive model of empathy that reflects the more commonly held notion of empathy as a multi-faceted construct with cognitive, behavioral and affective components. Given that the WE measure was contextualized to the workplace, a significant, but not overly high correlation, was expected between it and the IRI empathy measure.

Another important question is whether a newly developed measure is related to other logically associated (by either theory or deduction) constructs. Nomological validity, described as the “fit between obtained data patterns and theoretical predictions about those patterns” (Cook & Campbell, 1979 in Messick, 1989), is of interest here and was explored by relating WE to measures of Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction and Customer Service Orientation (CSO) (Lounsbury & Gibson, 1999; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986). A significant correlation between WE and Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction, and Customer Service Orientation was expected for those occupational groups for which empathy is important for job performance. I theorized that the greater WE a subject exhibited, the more job involved, satisfied, customer-service oriented they would be.

Another important issue addressed concerns incremental validity, specifically, whether the new measure of a construct accounts for unique (i.e., incremental) variance in a criterion variable above and beyond that accounted for by an established measure (or measures) of a construct (Messick, 1989). The incremental validity of a construct has also been defined as the “degree to which it raises the multiple correlation when it is included in a set of predictor variables” (Lord & Novick, 1968, p. 274). By examining the unique contribution of WE versus the IRI to the prediction of the criterion variables of Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction and the CSO, it was possible to examine the incremental validity of Workplace Empathy.

A fourth issue regarding the development of a new measure is whether groups regarded as high or low on the construct actually score high or low on the new measure of the construct. This issue was explored in the present study through the investigation of

known-group validity. Known-group validity refers to predicting and verifying differences on a construct as a function of group membership where there is evidence of preliminary consensus on the group's standing in relation to the construct (Messick, 1989; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Crano & Brewer, 1973).¹ Job groups identified as high or low in empathy were compared on WE, with the expectation that incumbents in high-empathy jobs would score higher on WE than incumbents in low empathy jobs.

In sum, following the development of a WE measure, its construct validity was explored by establishing a convergence of indicators, examining nomological validity, evaluating incremental validity, and assessing the known-group validity of WE.

Research Questions

The following five research questions were addressed:

- 1) A reliable scale of Workplace Empathy was developed. It was expected that this scale would comprise one factor with behavior, affective, and cognitive components of empathy and that a satisfactory (e.g., $>.70$) level of internal consistency reliability will be achieved.

¹ *A similar procedure has also been described as the method of contrasted groups by Anastasi and Urbina (1997), which they cite as a means "used quite commonly in the validation of personality tests" (p.122). The usage of expert ratings has also proven useful in the validation of personality tests because of the difficulty of providing objective criteria when studying more elusive constructs such as empathy (Anastasi and Urbina, 1997).*

- 2) In an effort to investigate whether WE was related to general empathy and demonstrates a “convergence of indicators” (Messick, 1989), the relationship between WE and an established measure of empathy, Davis’ (1980) Interpersonal Reactivity Index was examined. It was expected that there would be a significant correlation between these two measures. It was also expected that this relationship would be positive since they are both measuring empathy (convergence of indicators), but it was anticipated that the correlation would be modest (i.e., less than .5) because one measure was work-based and the other a measure of general empathy.
- 3) To explore nomological validity (Messick, 1989), the relationship between WE and measures of three work variables—job involvement, job satisfaction and customer service orientation—was examined in occupations for which empathy is deemed high or low by targeted experts. Specifically, it was expected that WE would be significantly and positively related to job involvement, satisfaction and customer service in those occupations for which empathy was considered to be an important attribute for employee performance.
- 4) To examine the incremental validity (Lord & Novick, 1968) of WE, the studies investigated the unique variance it accounted for in job satisfaction, job involvement and customer service orientation above and beyond the variance accounted for by Davis’ established measure of empathy, the IRI. Specifically, a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed with the IRI measure entered first and WE entered second to

separately predict job satisfaction, job involvement and customer service orientation. Incremental validity would be demonstrated by a significant change in the squared multiple correlation after entering WE.

- 5) In an effort to assess "known-group" validity (Messick, 1989; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Crano & Brewer, 1973) for WE, the measure was given to occupational groups which were regarded by subject matter experts as "High" and "Low" in terms of the importance of empathy for successful job performance. Specifically, incumbents in "High" empathy jobs were expected to have significantly higher mean scores on the work-based empathy scale than incumbents in "Low" empathy jobs.

CHAPTER X

VALIDATION OF THE WORKPLACE EMPATHY MEASURE

Overview of the Research

The purpose of Study 1 and Study 2 was to assess the reliability and validity of Workplace Empathy measure. Two separate studies were conducted to determine the WE's validity. Study 1 established the reliability of an original measure of empathy in the workplace (the WE) utilizing a population of students who were also employed in the workforce. Study 2 investigated the construct validity of WE by administering the WE measure, a general measure of empathy and other work-related measures to a workforce population.

Method**Participants***Study 1*

A total of 153 students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville participated in this study. One-fourth of the subjects were drawn from a first level undergraduate psychology course, two-fourths were drawn from third level undergraduate psychology courses and one fourth was drawn from a graduate course in Statistics.

Study 2

A total of 185 subjects in the workforce returned the revised WE and related workplace measures with some or all of them completed. The positions of the subjects ranged from clerical to managerial (see Appendix E: "Subject Occupations"). A total of 73 subjects were from a credit union, 18 from a construction company, 23 from an

information technology company, 13 and 11 from two governmental agencies, 4 from a television station, 27 from a radio station and 16 from a blood donor agency.

Measures

The Workplace Empathy Measure (WE)

A measure of Workplace Empathy (WE) was developed on the basis of contextualized versions of reliable and valid empathy subscales from Davis (1980), Mehrabian & Epstein (1972) and Lounsbury & Gibson (1999). The items were original, created specifically for the workplace and dealt with the ability to cognitively, affectively and behaviorally identify with the experience of another and in particular incorporated the concepts of empathic concern, perspective taking and emotional empathy.

Additionally, a fake-good scale was added to account for potential faking (Lounsbury & Gibson, 1999). A total of 57 items were included in the original measure in the pilot study (see Appendix A: "Pilot Empathy Measure"). Instructions required subjects to fill the measure out with a recent or past job position in mind and to also write the specific job in mind on the measure in an assigned space. A total of 22 items were retained from the pilot study with an alpha reliability of .82. This revised measure was then utilized in Study 2.

Based on a workforce population of 185 in Study 2, a Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted on each measure. WE's 22 original items yielded an alpha of .79.

Interpersonal Reactivity Index

Utilized in Study 2, Davis' (1979, 83) Interpersonal Reactivity Index, as discussed in chapter VII, is a general measure of empathy, which he divided into the following

subscales: Perspective-Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress. The measure consists of four 7-item scales with alpha reliability estimates ranging from .68-.79. In Study 2, the IRI yielded an overall alpha of .81. The strongest correlations with other measures (above .30 and $p < .05$) have been a for Perspective-Taking ($r = .42$) and a for the PD scale ($r = -.42$ only for females, though males still had a significant correlation of $-.25$) with Hogan's measure (see Johnson et al., 1983), and a correlation for the Fantasy and Empathic Concern scales with the Mehrabian-Epstein QMME. Furthermore ($r > .50$). Dillard and Hunter (1989), recommend the IRI as an overall more valid scale than the QMME. See the full description in Chapter VII for more details.

Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction and Customer Service Orientation

Included in Study 2, three work-related measures of Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction and Customer Service Orientation were included. Each of these measures has been validated in a number of industrial settings and has consistently yielded coefficient alphas of .7-.8 (Lounsbury & Gibson, 1999; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986). In Study 2, the Job Involvement scale ($n = 12$ items) had a coefficient alpha of .83, while the Job Satisfaction scale ($n = 9$ items) had an alpha of .73. The Customer Service Orientation scale ($n = 12$ items) had a coefficient alpha of .70.

Procedure

Study 1

Data collection for the pilot study took place in the Fall of 1999 at the University of Tennessee. Students were solicited in several undergraduate and graduate classes, yielding a total of 153 participants. Participation was completely voluntary and subjects

were provided with a letter of explanation along with the measure (see Appendix B: “Informed Consent for Pilot Study”).

Study 2

Davis’ Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), the Customer-Service Orientation (CSO) Scale, the Job Involvement Scale and the Job Satisfaction Scale were added to the WE measure in a composite questionnaire for distribution to subjects employed in the workforce. In addition, managers/supervisors were required to fill out Subject Matter Experts (SME) (see Landy & Vasey, 1991) forms, which rated their employees on a range of 1-5 of the importance of empathy to the performance of the particular jobs (see Appendix C: “Subject Matter Expert Rating”). A definition of a low (1), middle (3) and high (5) empathy in job performance was given on the SME. Individuals in supervisory positions were solicited over the phone to endorse their companies’ participation.

The following types of companies anonymously agreed to participate in this study: a credit union, a construction company, an information technology company, two governmental agencies, a television station, a radio station and a blood donor agency. Subjects either completed an interactive online form of the measures or a hard copy. Subjects who completed the online form emailed their responses directly back to me, but with only the last five digits of their social security number on the attached measures. Their emails were deleted once the measures were downloaded to assure anonymity (see Appendix D: “Dissertation Informed Consent”). Subjects were given a deadline of two weeks to complete and return their online measure to me and I personally collected those that filled out hard copies at the end of the two- week interval. Data collection took

approximately two months. Feedback was personally distributed to the companies following data collection and analysis.

Results

All statistics were conducted using the SPSS statistical package Version 8.0. (SPSS, 1999).

Study 1

Subjects that answered in a random manner (e.g., chose the same answer for at least ten items in a row) or failed to fill out approximately 15% of the items were excluded from the first set of analyses. As a result, a total of 113 subjects were included in the reliability and factor analyses. The majority of exclusions were due to students skipping the Customer Service Orientation measure. It was expected that not all students would be of age to have had such experience. While a varimax rotation resulted in the majority of items on one factor (Stevens, 1996), an unrotated exploratory factor analysis yielded the greatest number of reliable items ($> .35$) on one factor. A total of 22 items, all loading above .4, emerged. The resulting alpha for these 22 items was .82, meeting the commonly used criterion for reliability ($> .70$) (Cascio, 1987). The mean inter-item correlation was .24. These 22 items and their item-total correlations are displayed on the next page in Table 1.

There is a balanced representation of the three main components of empathy in this set of items with six behavioral items, eight cognitive items and eight affective items. Based on these results, these items significantly represent the multi-facet conceptualization of empathy appearing in much of the current literature. The relatively

Table 1

Final Workplace Empathy Items and Item-Total Correlations

	Workplace Empathy Items		Workplace Empathy Items	Item-Total Correlation
3.	When a coworker confides in me about their problems related to work, I will listen and try to help them however I can.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When a coworker confides in me about their problems related to work, I will discourage them from confiding in me.	.49
4.	I prefer to solve problems of a technical or practical nature.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I prefer to solve problems of a personal or social nature.	.37
8	I would rather understand the personalities of the people I work with.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would rather understand the job skills and abilities of the people I work with	.42
11.	It would bother me if a fellow coworker were fired.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It wouldn't bother me if a fellow coworker was fired	.37
12.	It's usually easy for me to relate to what other people are feeling.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It's usually difficult for me to relate to what other people are feeling	.63
13.	I believe that there are two sides to every work problem and that both perspectives should be considered carefully.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I believe that there is a right and a wrong for every work problem and no debate is necessary.	.36
16.	I rarely try to relate to my coworkers better by trying to understand what they think of me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I often try to relate to my coworkers better by trying to understand what they think of me.	.48
20.	In the workplace, I don't always think it's necessary to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	In the workplace, I always look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	.47
21.	I am unconcerned when I see a fellow coworker who is clearly stressed or upset.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I get concerned when I see a fellow coworker who is clearly stressed or upset.	.36
22.	When a coworker confides in me about their personal problems, I try to maintain a professional relationship.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When a coworker confides in me about their personal problems, I try to treat them like a friend	.59

Table 1 (Continued)

	Workplace Empathy Items		Workplace Empathy Items	Item-Total Correlation
23.	I always try to help a fellow employee who is clearly distressed.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I try not to bother a fellow employee that is clearly distressed.	.52
25.	I prefer to achieve emotional identification with the people I work with.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I prefer to keep some distance and not achieve emotional identification with the people I work with.	.58
30.	I often try to understand my coworkers better by trying to imagine how things look from their perspective.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I rarely try to understand my coworkers better by trying to imagine how things look from their perspective.	.51
35.	When I see a coworker make a fool of him/herself, it doesn't affect me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I see a coworker make a fool of him/herself, it bothers me.	.24
37.	It is usually difficult for me to imagine myself in other people's shoes.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It is usually easy for me to imagine myself in other people's shoes.	.38
39.	I find myself feeling impatient with people who bring their personal problems to work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I find myself wondering how I can help those people who bring their personal problems to work.	.46
40.	I try to make myself available to people who have problems at work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I try to stay out of other's people's problems at work	.51
41.	I feel the best course of action is to defend a coworker who is being unfairly slighted.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I feel the best course of action is to not defend a coworker who is being unfairly slighted.	.36
44.	I would rather be known as a good listener.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would rather be known as a persuasive talker.	.38
45.	My coworkers' misfortunes do not affect me at all.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	My coworkers' misfortunes tend to get to me.	.59
53.	It's more important to connect on a personal level with my clients/customers.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It's more important to remain professional with clients/customers.	.49
56.	Any customer/client that takes out their frustrations on me needs to deal with someone else.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Any customer/client that takes out their frustrations on me needs to be listened to and helped if possible.	.41

high coefficient alpha indicates that WE as measured here can be regarded as a unitary construct.

Study 2

As predicted, WE and the IRI were significantly and positively correlated ($r=.50$, $p<.000$).

It was also predicted that WE would be significantly and positively related to the Job Involvement, Satisfaction and Customer Service Orientation scales for those occupations that empathy was regarded as an important attribute for work performance, according to ratings on the SME (see Table 2). The SME or Subject Matter Expert Rating Form gave empathy ratings of 1-5. A "1" indicated that empathy was "only slightly, if at all" important to job performance; a "2" indicated "somewhat" important; a "3" indicated "moderately" important; a "4" indicated "important" to job performance and a "5" indicated that empathy was "very important" to job performance. Those subjects whose occupations were rated above a "3" on the SME were expected to be more strongly and positively related to the work-related measures than those subjects whose occupations were rated as a "3" or less on the SME (see Table 2). Two-thirds of the subjects' occupations were rated above a "3" (empathy was perceived as important or very important to the position) and a third were rated as a "3" or less (empathy was perceived as being of moderate or low importance to the position).

For those subjects in occupations that had higher empathy ratings (i.e. above a "3"), WE correlated positively and significantly only with the CSO ($r=.43$, $p<.000$). The IRI measure also correlated positively and significantly with the CSO ($r=.30$, $p<.003$).

Table 2

Correlations Between WE (Workplace Empathy Measure) and IRI (Interpersonal Reactivity Index) and Related Work Measures

For Total Sample

	<u>Customer Service Orientation</u>	<u>Job Involvement</u>	<u>Job Satisfaction</u>
IRI	.33**	.11	.14
WE	.42**	.04	.25**

For Subjects in High Empathy Jobs

	<u>Customer Service Orientation</u>	<u>Job Involvement</u>	<u>Job Satisfaction</u>
IRI	.30**	.15	.22*
WE	.43**	-.02	.15

For Subjects in Low Empathy Jobs

	<u>Customer Service Orientation</u>	<u>Job Involvement</u>	<u>Job Satisfaction</u>
IRI	.44**	.00	-.02
WE	.37**	.03	.28*

Bolded Numbers indicate significant difference between WE and IRI correlation with CSO

*p<.05

**p<.01

The difference between the correlation of WE with the CSO was significantly different from the correlation of IRI with CSO ($z = 2.75$, $p < .05$; Guilford & Fruchter, 1978).

For those subjects in occupations that had lower empathy ratings (i.e., "3" and below), WE was also significantly and positively correlated with the CSO ($r = .37$, $p < .005$) and the Job Satisfaction scale ($r = .28$, $p < .035$). The IRI was significantly and positively correlated only with the CSO ($r = .435$, $p > .001$), though the difference between correlations of the IRI and WE with the CSO for these "low" empathy jobs was not significant ($z = .57$). The respective correlations between WE and the IRI with the CSO for "high" and "low" empathy jobs were also not significantly different ($z = 1.34$ and 1.76 , respectively; Guilford & Fruchter, 1978).

For the total sample, irrespective of the importance of empathy to job performance, WE was significantly related to both the CSO ($r = .42$, $p < .000$) and the Job Satisfaction scale ($r = .25$, $p < .000$). WE was not significantly related to job involvement. The IRI only significantly and positively correlated with the CSO ($r = .33$, $p < .000$), but the difference between the IRI and WE correlations with the CSO turned out to be non-significant ($z = 1.24$). Thus, the only significant difference to emerge between the correlations of WE and the IRI in relation to the work measures was for the subjects in which empathy was considered very important to their job performance.

Another research question proposed that WE would add unique variance in accounting for customer service orientation, job involvement and job satisfaction, above that accounted for by the IRI. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were

conducted with the IRI entered first and WE entered second. The amount of unique variance contributed by a variable in a multiple regression equation is represented by the squared semi-partial correlation coefficient (Steven, 1996). When WE was entered after the IRI to predict the CSO, a significant change was demonstrated in the squared multiple correlation (squared semi-partial $r = .083$, $p < .000$). For job involvement, WE did not account for any unique variance. For job satisfaction, WE added unique variance above that accounted for by IRI (squared semi-partial $r = .041$, $p < .009$). As can be seen in Table 3, the IRI accounted for unique variance only in predicting Customer Service Orientation (squared semi-partial $r = .02$, $P < .05$). Even then, WE accounted for an additional 8% of the variance in Customer Service. WE accounted for significant additional variance in the criterion above and beyond that accounted for by the IRI.

In the final research question, incumbents in "high" empathy jobs were expected to have significantly higher mean scores on WE than those in the "low" empathy jobs. An independent samples t-test confirmed that the mean WE scores for those in the "high" empathy jobs were significantly higher than WE scores of those in the "low" empathy jobs ($t = -3.036$, $df=154$, $p < .003$). Furthermore, no significant difference emerged for the high and low groups on the IRI ($t = -1.622$, $df=155$, $p < .107$).

Summary

In sum, the majority of the predictions for Study 2 were confirmed. WE and IRI are significantly related, but the shared variance of these two measures was not greater than .50. WE is significantly related to customer service orientation and job satisfaction, whereas WE was not significantly related to job involvement. Furthermore, WE accounts

Table 3

Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression for IRI (Interpersonal Reactivity Index) and WE (Workplace Empathy Measure) when Accounting for Variance in Customer Service, Job Satisfaction and Job Involvement

Dependent Variable: Customer Service Orientation

Step	Variable	Multiple R	Rsq	Rsq Change	Squared Semi-Partial Correlation
1	IRI	.331	.110	.110**	.02*
2	WE	.439	.193	.083**	.08**
1	WE	.415	.172	.172**	--
2	IRI	.439	.193	.020*	--

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Step	Variable	Multiple R	Rsq	Rsq Change	Squared Semi-Partial Correlation
1	IRI	.140	.020	.020	.00
2	WE	.247	.061	.041**	.04**
1	WE	.246	.060	.060**	--
2	IRI	.247	.061	.000	--

Dependent Variable: Job Involvement

Step	Variable	Multiple R	Rsq	Rsq Change	Squared Semi-Partial Correlation
1	IRI	.108	.012	.012	.01
2	WE	.110	.012	.000	.00
1	WE	.037	.001	.001	--
2	IRI	.110	.012	.011	--

*p<.05

**p<.01

for additional variance above and beyond the IRI in predicting customer service and job satisfaction. Lastly, as predicted, participants in “high” empathy jobs had significantly higher WE scores than participants in “low” empathy jobs, whereas IRI scores did not significantly differ between the two groups. Thus, the degree of nomological, incremental and known-group validity established in this study was significant.

Discussion

Overview of the Findings

Most of the research questions were supported in this study of empathy in the workplace and a significant degree of construct validity was reached for WE. A reliable scale of empathy in the workplace (WE) was developed and refined. The final set of items represent a balanced of cognitive, affective and behavioral items. This supports the multi-faceted conceptualization of empathy, which is the most prevalent and comprehensive definition of empathy in the literature (Basch, 1983; Feldstein & Gladstein, 1980; Levenson & Reuf, 1992).

WE also turned out to be significantly and positively related to the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), a general measure of empathy. The fact that they share 25% common variance suggests that both measures are tapping a common factor to some extent. However, the correlation was sufficiently modest so as to indicate that although the two measures are related, they are not just measuring the same construct. This is to be expected since my measure of empathy was contextualized for the workplace, whereas the IRI was designed as a general measure of empathy.

As anticipated, when applied to a workplace setting, WE outperformed the IRI in several respects and contributed to the establishment of nomological validity for WE. For

the total sample, WE was more strongly related to the Customer Service Orientation scale (CSO) and Job Satisfaction (JS) than the IRI. Likewise, WE contributed variance above that accounted for by the IRI in the case of two work-related measures. Specifically, WE contributed an additional 4% of the variance in Job Satisfaction and an additional 8% of the variance in Customer Service Orientation.

WE was also found to be more strongly related to the CSO than the IRI for those occupations where empathy was regarded as important to job performance which added to the degree of incremental validity of WE. Correlations between the empathy measures and the CSO were not significantly lower for those occupations in which empathy was regarded as of moderate or little importance to job performance. WE and the IRI were still positively related to the CSO, though not significantly different in their respective correlations for these "low" empathy occupations. Similarly, incremental validity was positively assessed when WE also distinguished between incumbents in "high" empathy jobs from those in "low" empathy jobs. That is, the "high" empathy jobs had significantly higher mean WE scores than incumbents in "low" empathy jobs. The IRI, in contrast, did not differentiate between the two groups.

Thus, there was no case in which the IRI outperformed WE and a considerable degree of construct validity was established for WE. These combined results not only affirm the importance of empathy in the workplace, but they also reinforce the notion that the meaning of empathy differs as a function of the context in which it is studied. The particularly strong relationship between WE and the CSO is consistent with several findings in the literature that indicate empathy to be related to interpersonal effectiveness, social skills, and helping (Eisenberg, Wentzel, and Harris, 1998; Karlin, 1990).

Given these encouraging findings, the Workplace Empathy measure might be useful in selecting candidates for positions in which customer service is of major importance to job performance. Furthermore, such candidates who score high on WE would also be more desirable in that they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. Although further research would be needed to test this proposition, it appears to be an application which merits investigation. For example, candidates for customer service jobs could be given the WE with the results being recorded, but not used for hiring decisions. Later, criterion data on job performance in terms of customer service, absenteeism and turnover could be collected and the predictive validity of the WE measure could be assessed.

Findings that Failed to Support Research Questions

Where both WE and the IRI failed was in relation to Job Involvement, with which neither measure correlated significantly. One possible explanation of this finding involves the definition of empathy and other characteristics that empathy has correlated with in the past. Empathy is focused on understanding, affectively experiencing and behaviorally responding to the world of the other. Empathy has been found to positively correlate with self-esteem, helping, prosocial behavior, morality and avoidance of dispositional attributions for behavior (Coke, Batson & McDavis, 1978; Davis, 1979; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Regan & Totten, 1975; Galper, 1976; Gould & Sigall, 1977), while even *perceiving* empathy from superiors in a work environment has been related to stronger employee commitment, performance ratings and satisfaction (Karlin, 1990; Cooper, 1978; Davis, 1979). That is, in addition to being other-focused, empathy or even

the perception thereof is traditionally related to multiple positive behaviors and characteristics.

Upon closer examination of the Job Involvement scale, half the items could easily be perceived as negative from an empathic person's perspective. They involve putting one's job above *everything*, enjoying the job above *everything*, etc. Someone who would strongly and positively endorse such items would not be an empathic person because they would be focused on their work above all else, whereas empathic individuals place their greatest importance on people, by definition. Work would be an end in of itself for the type of person who would endorse these items, in contrast to the empathic person who relates best to people and not things. For example, several subjects wrote directly on the Job Involvement Scale something to this effect: "I really like my job, but family/loved ones/living by the Bible comes first." In short, the empathic subjects are less likely to endorse those job-involvement items which might be seen as encroaching on family or personal life. It appears, based on these findings, that job involvement is not related to empathy.

Another questionable finding is the difference between mean scores for the "high" and "low" empathy groups. Although the mean difference between WE scores for "high" and "low" empathy jobs was significantly different with those in "high" empathy jobs scoring significantly higher on WE than those in "low" empathy jobs, the difference is seemingly very small. The mean score for the "high" empathy jobs was 3.9 and the mean for the "low" empathy jobs was 3.7. Although WE remains statistically superior in distinguishing between high and low empathy jobs, especially as the IRI did not at all differentiate between the two groups, such a difference may be of questionable value in

applied settings. That is, in terms of known-group validity, the WE appears to have achieved statistical but not practical significance (Chow, 1998; Kirk, 1996). However, viewed from another perspective, the difference between high and low empathy groups might be camouflaged by the fact that the scale mean scores were used. If we look at scale total scores, the difference between high and low empathy groups changes from 3.7 vs. 3.9 to 81.4 vs. 85.8, which might have practical significant in some settings, such as pre-employment selection where small predictor differences can results in large criterion differences givens small selection ratios (e.g., choosing 1 candidate out of 20 or 50) (Muchnisky, 1993).

Limitations of Current Study

Although a strength of this study is the diversity of participating companies—a credit union, a construction company, an information-technology company, two governmental agencies, a t.v. station, a radio station and a blood donor agency—subject participation still suffered from volunteer bias. Though endorsed by their superiors, the employees were not in any way required to fill out this measure and thus, it might be that the more empathic people in these companies were the ones likely to volunteer for the study as they would be more likely to want to help the investigator. Furthermore, a low response rate for several of the companies might further bias the generalizability of my sample to the jobs and companies being considered. Four of the targeted companies had several hundred employees and the maximum response-rate was 35%. The other companies had significantly fewer employees that I could target for this study (10-30) and the response-rate ranged from 50-100%.

Another limitation of this study is the reliance on self-report for all the measures.

Ideally, a mixture of self-report and more objective measures would be best as studies have shown that findings for empathy are somewhat dependent on how it is measured (Ickes, Stinson, Bissonnette, & Garcia, 1990; Levenson and Reuf, 1992). Also, the fact that two-thirds of the subjects' occupations were rated as "high" empathy jobs on the Subject Matter Expert rating form (SME) is another indication that perhaps supervisors had a positive bias in rating the positions. From the standpoint of external validation of the WE, it would be a logical step to study it in relation to more objective measures such as productivity, turnover, or promotions.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research could move forward from this study in the service of more strongly establishing the construct validity of empathy in the workplace. The WE measure could be widely distributed to a larger sample where all employees are required to complete it or given a small incentive (e.g., leave work an hour early). In addition to the use of additional objective measures, the issue of job status, raised by Karlin (1990) could also be addressed to discover if the degree/level of empathy differs according to position status.

As far as developing a useful measure of empathy in the workplace, this study has demonstrated the importance of context. It would therefore be a logical next step to target a particular kind of job within a certain industry in which a researcher would have sufficient reason to believe empathy is important. Validating WE against job performance would be an important first step toward using it in pre-employment selection..

In general, it would appear, based on past and present research, that empathy in applied settings can be best understood situationally. Davis (1979, 1980, 1983) has created the most impressive and comprehensive measure of empathy to date and, while Davis' IRI was related significantly and positively to Customer Service Orientation, my WE measure was still significantly and more strongly related to customer service as operationalized in the present study. That is not to say that Davis' IRI measure is not useful in other settings or might not be more valid in some settings, but in the present setting, the WE measure demonstrates greater validity. The present research also lends credence to the proposition that, compared to a more general measure of a construct, more contextualized measures may lead to increased validity in more specific research settings. Hopefully, future research on empathy in the workplace as well as other milieus will confirm and extend the present findings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PILOT EMPATHY MEASURE

Please indicate the job title you currently hold or the one you held for the longest period of time _____

The items will be presented in an anchored format, with opposing statements for each anchor (1-5). The statements will be self-descriptions of scenarios or character traits. Choosing a "1" indicates that the subject agrees most with that anchored statement on the left, choosing a "2" will indicate that the subject somewhat agrees with that left statement, and choosing a "3" will indicate that the subject sees himself as somewhere in between the two anchoring statements. By consequence, a "4" would indicate some agreement toward the right anchoring statement and "5" would indicate total agreement with the right-anchored statement.

1.	I maintain a positive mood even if the people I work with seem depressed.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I do not feel OK if the people I work with seem depressed.
2.	Before criticizing a coworker, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Before criticizing a coworker, I focus on how I can suggest they correct their behavior
3.	When a coworker confides in me about their problems related to work, I will listen and try to help them however I can.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When a coworker confides in me about their problems related to work, I will discourage them from confiding in me.
4.	I prefer to solve problems of a technical or practical nature.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I prefer to solve problems of a personal or social nature.
5.	People never know when I am not telling the truth.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	People can always tell when I am not telling the truth.
6.	I become nervous if my coworkers around me seem to be nervous.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I don't become nervous if my coworkers seem to be nervous.
7.	If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste time listening to my coworkers' arguments.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Even if I'm sure I'm right about something, I still listen to my coworkers' arguments
8.	I would rather understand the personalities of the people I work with.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would rather understand the job skills and abilities of the people I work with
9.	Most of my employers have taken advantage of me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Most of my employers have been good to me.
10.	The people I work with do not have a great influence on my	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	The people I work with have a great influence on my moods.

	moods.		
11.	It would bother me if a fellow coworker were fired.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It wouldn't bother me if a fellow coworker was fired
12.	It's usually easy for me to relate to what other people are feeling.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It's usually difficult for me to relate to what other people are feeling
13.	I believe that there are two sides to every work problem and that both perspectives should be considered carefully.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I believe that there is a right and a wrong for every work problem and no debate is necessary.
14.	I tend to feel embarrassed when it is clear that a coworker is feeling embarrassed.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I do not tend to feel embarrassed when it is clear that a coworker is feeling embarrassed.
15.	Life has been a raw deal for me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Life has been good to me.
16.	I rarely try to relate to my coworkers better by trying to understand what they think of me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I often try to relate to my coworkers better by trying to understand what they think of me.
18.	It's more important for me to understand the thinking styles' and cognitive processes of my coworkers.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It's more important for me to understand the emotions and feelings of my coworkers.
19.	A person who steals out of necessity is less to blame than a person who steals for personal gain.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	A person who steals out of necessity is just as much to blame as a person who steals for personal gain.
20.	In the workplace, I don't always think it's necessary to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	In the workplace, I always look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.
21.	I am unconcerned when I see a fellow coworker who is clearly stressed or upset.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I get concerned when I see a fellow coworker who is clearly stressed or upset.
22.	When a coworker confides in me about their personal problems, I try to maintain a professional relationship.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When a coworker confides in me about their personal problems, I try to treat them like a friend
23.	I always try to help a fellow employee who is clearly distressed.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I try not to bother a fellow employee that is clearly distressed.
24.	If I say something that is not true, I worry about it a lot, even if nobody knows what I did.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	If I say something that is not true, I forget about it, as long as nobody knows what I did

25.	I prefer to achieve emotional identification with the people I work with.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I prefer to keep some distance and not achieve emotional identification with the people I work with.
26.	When I'm upset at a coworker, I usually try to "put myself in his or her shoes" for a while.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I'm upset at a coworker, I usually try shrug it off and focus on my work.
27.	Most companies try to pay employees as little as they can.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Most companies try to pay employees a fair wage.
28.	When working on a group project, I am usually unaware of the moods of my teammates.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When working on a group project, I can usually sense the moods of my teammates.
29.	I would rather be seen as a decisive, take-charge person.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would rather be seen as a perceptive, understanding person.
30.	I often try to understand my coworkers better by trying to imagine how things look from their perspective.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I rarely try to understand my coworkers better by trying to imagine how things look from their perspective.
31.	I don't think it is OK for a long-term employee to use a sick day for personal reasons.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I think it is OK for a long-term employee to use a sick day for personal reasons.
32.	When I see another coworker being taken advantage of, I try to mind my own business.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I see another coworker being taken advantage of, I try to do something about it.
33.	When I am not paid well for my work, I sometimes take something little to even the score.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I am not paid well for my work, I would never take something to even the score—even if it was a small thing.
34.	I believe very few employees take company property home from work without returning it.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I believe many employees take company property home from work without returning it.
35.	When I see a coworker make a fool of him/herself, it doesn't affect me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I see a coworker make a fool of him/herself, it bothers me.
36.	Even if I don't feel like I'm being treated fairly, I will still do my job to the best of my ability.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I will do my job to the best of my ability as long as I am being treated fairly.
37.	It is usually difficult for me to imagine myself in other people's shoes.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	It is usually easy for me to imagine myself in other people's shoes.
38.	When I pay cash and somebody gives me too much change, I always call it to their attention.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I pay cash and somebody gives me too much change, I usually don't say anything about it.
39.	I find myself feeling impatient with people who bring their personal problems to work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I find myself wondering how I can help those people who bring their personal problems to work.

40.	I try to make myself available to people who have problems at work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I try to stay out of other's people's problems at work
41.	I feel the best course of action is to defend a coworker who is being unfairly slighted.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I feel the best course of action is to not defend a coworker who is being unfairly slighted.
42.	Even if my job does not pay good money, I always put in a good day's work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	If my job does not pay good money, I sometimes work slow or take an extra break.
43.	I would buy stolen merchandise if it would help out a person in need and I knew neither of us would be caught.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would never buy stolen merchandise from anybody no matter how great their need.
44.	I would rather be known as a good listener.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would rather be known as a persuasive talker.
45.	My coworkers' misfortunes do not affect me at all.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	My coworkers' misfortunes tend to get to me.
46.	Everybody cheats a little somewhere in their work.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Hardly anybody cheats in their work.
47.	If an employee receives too much money in their paycheck, it is their responsibility to correct the situation.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	If an employee receives too much money in their paycheck, it is the responsibility of the payroll department to correct the situation.
48.	When I see a coworker being treated unfairly, I try to actively intervene.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I see a coworker being treated unfairly, I try to avoid getting involved.
49.	If a coworker was apprehensive about a project, I would not necessarily help them out.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	If a coworker was apprehensive about a project, I would most likely help them out.
50.	I sometimes feel like the whole world is trying to cheat me.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I seldom, if ever, feel like the whole world is trying to cheat me.
	ONLY THOSE WHO <i>HAVE OR HAVE HAD</i> CLIENTS/CUSTOMERS SHOULD ANSWER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS		ONLY THOSE WHO <i>HAVE OR HAVE HAD</i> CLIENTS/CUSTOMERS SHOULD ANSWER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS
51.	I would not have any problem whatsoever with rearranging my schedule to accommodate my clients/customers.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	I would have a problem with rearranging my schedule to accommodate my clients/customers
52.	If I had some bad news for a client/customer, I would tell them straight out without trying to gloss over anything.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	If I had some bad news for a client/customer, I would express it very tactfully and carefully.
53.	It's more important to connect	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	It's more important to remain

	on a personal level with my clients/customers.	1 2 3 4 5	professional with clients/customers.
54.	If I think a customer/client is wrong, it is my job to bring that to their attention and let them know my perspective.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Even if I think a customer/client is wrong, I still try to understand things from their perspective.
55.	There's always a way to solve a client's/customer's problems.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Sometimes a client's/customer's problems are unsolvable.
56.	Any customer/client that takes out their frustrations on me needs to deal with someone else.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	Any customer/client that takes out their frustrations on me needs to be listened to and helped if possible.
57.	Even though I may get frustrated with a customer/client, I can still readily see their point of view.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1 2 3 4 5	When I get frustrated with a customer/client, it is hard for me to understand their point of view

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PILOT STUDY

To Whom It May Concern:

For the purpose of my dissertation in the Industrial/Applied area of the Experimental Psychology Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee, I am researching work-based personality attributes.

I would like you to answer the following items in reference to a working position you either currently hold or, if you are not presently working, the working position you held for the longest period of time.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You are not obligated to continue if you feel uncomfortable at any time.

Filling out this measure constitutes your informed consent in this study. This measure is anonymous so do not put your name or any other personal identification on this form.

Please be aware that you are contributing to an important body of research that is focusing on qualities that contribute to personal and professional success in life.

Sincerely,

Wendy C. Chambers, M.A.
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee at Knoxville
College of Arts and Sciences
307 Austin Peay Building
Knoxville, TN 37996-0900

APPENDIX C

Subject Matter Expert Rating Form

Workplace Empathy Study

Date Job Title Years in This Job / Career Area:

Company Plant/Facility Job Being Rated:

Instructions: Based on the description of empathy below, rate the degree (by checking the appropriate box) to which empathy is considered important for the full and satisfactory performance of the job being rated using the following scale:

- (leave blank) if this cognitive ability is not required at all for this job.
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| ☐ | 1 | Only Slightly, If at all important for the job as a whole. |
| ☐ | 2 | Somewhat important for the job as a whole. |
| ☐ | 3 | Moderately important for the job as a whole. |
| ☐ | 4 | Important for the job as a whole. |
| ☐ | 5 | Very important for the job as a whole. |

Empathic Ability

General Definition: Empathy includes the ability to accurately appraise another's emotional situation, be receptive to another person's needs and respond to those needs.

- ◆ **Example of Level 1 (Slightly, If at all important to job performance):** In this type of occupation, it is important to be task-focused and objective. To perform well, an individual needs to be analytical when appraising situations and rely on facts and data as opposed to personal factors when drawing conclusions. A good performer in this position should not have trouble giving or receiving tough performance feedback.
- ◆ **Example of Level 3 (Moderately Important to Job Performance):** In this type of occupation, it is important to be sensitive to both task and interpersonal consequences concerning decisions and actions. A good performer should be able to understand the viewpoints of others and appreciate their emotional or personal situations, but they do not ever feel "threatened" or overwhelmed by the emotional needs of another and do not confuse the others' needs with their own. Such a performer should take logical as well as personal or emotional factors into account when appraising a problem.
- ◆ **Example of Level 5 (Very Important to Job Performance):** In this type of occupation, it is very important to be able to tune into the thoughts and feelings of others and actively respond to meet their needs. A good performer must be insightful and considerate of the feelings of others, such as taking the concerns and preferences of others into account when making decisions. The ability to read others well and also gain rapport is very consequential to top performance in this position.

APPENDIX D

DISSERTATION INFORMED CONSENT

To Whom It May Concern:

For the purpose of my dissertation in the Industrial/Applied area of the Experimental Psychology Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee, I am researching work-based personality attributes.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You are not obligated to continue if you feel uncomfortable at any time.

Filling out these measures of this **Work Styles Survey** constitutes your informed consent in this study. These measures are anonymous so do not put your name on this form, but **only the last five digits of your social security number and the name of your company and department for the purpose of feedback. Your name will never be associated with your results and only I will have access to your anonymous results. ALL FEEDBACK WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN PERSON, NOT OVER EMAIL.**

To fill out the 5 measures (the last should be Customer Service Orientation) over email, please click on the attached document, which should automatically open in Word (if not, save it to your desktop and open in Word). For those spaces indicating names or numbers, please place the cursor within the box and type accordingly. For those boxes that need to be checked (the items on the measures themselves), please use your cursor to click once on the box you choose and an "x" will appear. **IF YOU SHOULD ACCIDENTALLY CHECK MORE THAN ONE BOX**, please click the box you do NOT want a second time and it will remove the "x."

It should take you approximately 15-20 minutes to fill out all five measures.

You will have to save the survey to a local drive and fill it out before you will be able to send it back via email. Please attach this completed document to an email to wendra@utk.edu

Please be aware that you are contributing to an important body of research that is focusing on qualities that contribute to personal and professional success in life.

Please also fill out and return these measures by ***, 2000 as this is a time-sensitive project. Thank you very much!**

Sincerely,
Wendy C. Chambers, M.A. (a.k.a. "WENDRA")
Department of Psychology
University of Tennessee at Knoxville

APPENDIX E

LIST OF PARTICIPATING OCCUPATIONS

Account executive sales
Account executive sports anchor
Accounting support specialist
Administrative assistant
Application programmer
Applications specialist systems
Associate workforce planner
Business development assistant
Car facts assistant
Clinical consultant
CIs specialist
Collections officer
Consumer loan underwriter
Coordinator
Credit card specialist
Documentation specialist
Electronic operations
Emergency response consultant
Estimating coordinator
Field operations manager
File clerk
General ledger specialist
General manager human resources
Head teller
Human resources assistant
Human resources consultant
Implementation specialist
Industrial hygienist

Interviewer
Manager (variety)
Marketing assistant
Marketing development
Member services officer
Mortgage loan officer
Nurse
Payroll specialist
Phlebotomist
Project controls administrator
Project secretary
Real estate service specialist
Receptionist
Report writer
Safety specialist
Software engineer
Senior business service loan
Systems analyst
Systems consultant
Systems engineer
Technical consultant
Teller
Training consultant

VITA

As I have been writing APA style all my life (it seems), I take great pleasure in writing in the first person throughout this document and the Vita will be no exception. I have what superficially appears to be a traditional Psychology background, but I am prepared to set the record straight. I do indeed have a B.A. in General Psychology from the University of North Florida and an M.A. from Florida Atlantic University, wrapping up with the Ph.D. here in Knoxville, Tennessee. However, coupled with my interest in Psychology is my passion for the arts, particularly theatre and creative writing, which I have pursued alongside my more conservative education. Though my dissertation topic of empathy was inspired by the new wave of Emotional Intelligence that Daniel Goleman sparked back in 1995, I feel most of all that empathy captures these twin passions. Because, I sincerely believe, whether a Psychologist, Actress or Writer, empathy is among the primary elements necessary for excellence in these pursuits.