Promotion and Prevention Fit Are Different but Lead to Equal Performance: Examining Fit

Sensitivity and Task Performance

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ABSTRACT (academic)

Regulatory focus theory encompasses promotion focus, seeking success and prevention focus, avoiding failure. These mutually exclusive focuses, when matched with the appropriate goal pursuit strategy, promotion with eager and prevention with vigilant, create a state of regulatory fit. This state of regulatory fit leads to different outcomes which the current study has grouped into fit sensitivity and performance. Fit sensitivity is the sensitivity to fit effects with an absence of correctness while performance outcomes are based in correctness. The goal of the current study was to examine both fit sensitivity and performance in the same task to demonstrate a difference in fit sensitivity effects between types of fit while showing equal performance between promotion and prevention fit.

An applicant hiring simulation was implemented. 24 applicant profiles for the position of police officer were generated, six with high risk/ variable reward elements meant to align with individuals in a state of promotion fit, six with low-risk/consistent-reward elements meant to align with individuals in a state of prevention fit, and six applicant profiles with a high probability of succeeding and finally six applicant profiles meant to have a low probability of succeeding. Participants rated the applicant profiles on their suitability and recommended 12 applicants to be hired. Initial results did not support the hypotheses, however exploratory analysis did demonstrate fit sensitivity for prevention fit. Additional exploratory analyses are discussed and possible explanations for the lack of results are examined.

ABSTRACT (general audience)

Regulatory focus theory includes two types of motivational orientations, promotion focus which centers on seeking success and prevention focus which centers on avoiding failure. If the way an individual's pursues a goal (goal pursuit strategy) matches his or her regulatory focus orientation then he or she is considered to be in a state of regulatory fit. This state leads to various outcomes different than if an individual is in a state of non-fit. In the current study I have grouped these consequences into two types: fit sensitivity and performance. Essentially fit sensitivity is when the consequences seen do not have a correctness component and may be difference depending on the type of regulatory fit (promotion and prevention). Performance is when there is a correct or incorrect component to the outcome. The goal of the current study was to show that although fit sensitivity outcomes may be different for promotion fit and prevention fit, both fit states can lead to the same performance. With the initial analysis hypotheses were not supported but exploratory analysis did lend some support for prevention fit sensitivity. Discussion includes possible explanations for the lack of fit effects found.

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Introduction

Motivation orientation is a central construct in many models of self-regulation (Grant & Shin, 2011; Kadhiravan & Suresh, 2008), especially in achievement contexts (Arnold, 1985). Motivational orientation theories are based on the hedonic principle that individuals tend to move towards pleasure (i.e. positive outcomes) and away from pain (i.e. negative outcomes; Higgins, 1997). According to Higgins (2002), the hedonistic principle manifests as promotion regulatory focus and prevention regulatory focus. In simplistic terms, individuals in a promotion-focus state seek success while individuals in a prevention-focus state seek the absence of failure (Higgins, 2002). When an individual's regulatory focus aligns with his/her actions and methods chosen to achieve a goal, regulatory fit is experienced (Higgins, 2002).

Regulatory fit leads to an experience labeled as "feeling right" (Cesario, Grant & Higgins, 2004; Hong & Lee, 2008; Sassenberg, Jonas, Shah & Brazy, 2007) that is characterized as a feeling of correctness that operates below conscious awareness (Sassenberg et al., 2007). Feeling right leads to self-regulatory "smoothness" that manifests in a multitude of ways. For example, individuals in state of regulatory fit are more motivated (Hong & Lee, 2007; Higgins, 2002; Jarzebowski, Palermo, &Van de Berg, 2012), add value to objects above and beyond their true value (Higgins, 2001; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegel, & Molden, 2003), and are more persuadable (Cesario et al., 2008; Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2008).

Regulatory fit has been studied in many contexts, using different dependent variable constructs, which can be grouped into two overarching categories: fit sensitivity and task performance. Fit sensitivity dependent variables are sensitive to the consequences of fit and non-fit, but measurements of these variables do not connote "correctness" or effectiveness. An

example of a fit sensitivity dependent variable is attitudes about consumer products as a function of receiving product information in a state of fit or non-fit (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2006).

The category, task performance, includes dependent variables that reflect correctness or qualitative, evaluative components of performance (Keller & Bless, 2006; Shah, Higgins, Friedman, 1998). For example, number of anagrams solved, or an external evaluation of the quality of behavior. Plessner et al. (2009) found that participants in a state of regulatory fit scored more soccer penalty shots compared to those participants in a state of non-fit. Fit sensitivity dependent variables are more often used to validate regulatory fit theory than task performance. Additionally, fit sensitivity and task performance dependent variables have not been included in the same study.

In the current study, I sought to show that individuals in a state of fit form attitudes and behavioral intentions (i.e., fit sensitivity) that sustain regulatory fit and that regulatory fit also increases task performance. I sought to show that this task performance is independent of the fit sensitivity. Alternatively stated, fit produces the aforementioned regulatory smoothness, which simultaneously affects fit sensitivity and task performance in a context where task performance is not a function of the attitudinal variable used to demonstrate fit sensitivity.

Regulatory Focus Theory

Regulatory focus theory is based in the hedonic principle but it focuses on success and failure. Unlike the positivity and negativity bias, a theory that has been connected to approach and avoidance tendencies (Wojciszkle, Brycz, & Borkenau, 1993) regulatory focus is more focused on success and failure then general positives and negatives. When promotion-focused, individuals seek to achieve their ideal self (Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda, 2002) and strive to achieve hopes, wishes, and aspirations (Shah, Higgins, Friedman, 1998). When prevention-

focused, individuals avoid the presence of negative outcomes and seek the absence of negative outcomes (Cesario et al., 2004; Higgins, 2002). In a prevention-focused state individuals strive to fulfill oughts, duties, and obligations (Shah et al., 1998).

To understand promotion and prevention regulatory focus, consider an example of two employees seeking a promotion. The first employee consistently goes beyond the required tasks, stays late, and helps co-workers; this individual's behaviors are characteristic of a chronic promotion-focused individual. Juxtaposed, consider the second employee who never misses a deadline, always comes to work on time, and ensures that reports are mistake free; this individual's behaviors are characteristic of a prevention-focused individual. Note that both employees may achieve the promotion, regardless of their motivational orientation preference.

Regulatory focus has been examined both as a chronic preference and situationally-induced state. Chronic focus refers to the tendency to orient toward promotion or prevention focus. However, chronic regulatory focus preference can be suppressed when regulatory focus is by situational-priming of the opposite orientation (Cesario et al., 2004; Cesario et al; 2008; Higgins et al., 2003). Regulatory focus has similar effects regardless of whether it is chronic preference or situationally primed (Forster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998; Freitas, Liberman, Salovey, & Higgins, 2002). For example, Freitas et al. (2002) found that both primed and chronic regulatory focus led to similar decisions for when to start an academic or non-academic task (i.e. starting an essay and anagram task). Specifically, individuals in prevention (both chronic and primed) regulatory focus states preferred to start earlier on tasks than individuals in promotion (both chronic and primed) regulatory focus state (Freitas, et al., 2002).

Regulatory Fit

An individual achieves regulatory fit when regulatory focus aligns with an enacted goal pursuit strategy. Goal pursuit strategy is the tactic by which an individual achieves a goal. According to regulatory fit theory, goals are pursued in either an eager manner or vigilant manner (Higgins, 2002; Higgins et al., 2003; Lee & Aaker, 2004). Eager goal pursuits align with promotion-focus and are actions that cause movements towards positive outcomes, whereas vigilant goal pursuits align with prevention-focus that causes movement toward avoiding negative outcomes (Cesario, Higgins, Scholer, 2008; Higgins, 2002). When regulatory fit is experienced, the goal pursuit strategy reinforces an individual's current regulatory focus state, and vice versa. The goal pursuit strategy is not filling in a missing void but rather continuing an already existing regulatory state (Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2008).

This state of regulatory fit has been suggested to cause the experience of "feeling right" (Cesario et al., 2004; Hong & Lee, 2008). Feeling right "should not be misunderstood as an experience that necessarily reaches the state of conscious awareness […]" (Sassenberg et al, 2007, p. 251); rather, feeling right is "a positive experiential state" (Cesario, et al., 2008, p. 452) of correctness (Cesario et al., 2004; Hong & Lee, 2008). Feeling right is viewed as the mediating mechanism between regulatory focus and both fit sensitivity and task performance outcomes (Higgins et al., 2003).

A state of regulatory non-fit occurs when an individual's regulatory focus does not match his/ her goal pursuit strategy. Just as regulatory fit has been connected to "feeling right" with positive outcomes, regulatory non-fit creates of a feeling of wrongness (Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova, & Tredeau, 2009) leading to poor performance (Keller & Bless, 2006) or absence of fit sensitivity (Higgins et al., 2003).

Fit sensitivity. The distinguishing aspect of fit sensitivity dependent variables is that they are attitudinal responses or behavioral responses free from qualitative connotations of ineffective or effective performance. Examples of fit sensitivity variables include: assigning greater values to objects when in a state of fit (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Higgins et al. 2003; Wu & Hsu, 2015), attitude development (e.g. attitudes about an advertisement; Lee & Aaker, 2004), increased self-reports of task motivation/engagement (Cesario et al., 2008; Jarzebowski, Palermo & Van de Berg, 2012), behavioral intentions (e.g. intention to purchase more organic vegetables; Hsu & Chen, 2014) and behaviors (e.g. either turning in an essay that the researcher assigned or not; Freitas et al.,2002). The current study included attitude development and behavioral intention as the regulatory fit sensitivity variable.

Regulatory Fit and Performance. Performance dependent variables are behaviors that are reflective of ineffective and effective performance. To date, regulatory fit research has focused almost exclusively on objective performance criteria (Keller & Bless, 2006) such as anagrams (Shah, Higgins & Friedman, 1998; see Liu, Wang, Ren, & Liu, 2017 for usage of a subjective performance measure). For example, Keller and Bless (2006) found that participants in a state of regulatory fit scored higher on both a math test and a spatial ability test than those in a state of non-fit. Regulatory fit led to better performance regardless of regulatory focus type (i.e. promotion or prevention).

Decision accuracy, also an objective criterion, refers to measurement of performance where individuals are tasked with making correct choices based on predetermined criteria. Decision accuracy has not been examined in regulatory fit research, but decision accuracy is a common dependent variable in many research areas (Paquette, & Kida, 1988; Speier, Vessey, & Valacich, 2003) such as eyewitness research (Sporer, Penrod, Read, & Cutler,1995; Sporer,

1993). Decision accuracy is similar to the complexities of organizational decision-making. The process of applying criteria to choices made reflects processes more relatable to the organizational decisions than other performance measures studied in regulatory fit research (e.g. test scores Shah et al., 1998). Therefore, the current study uses decision accuracy as the task performance dependent variable.

Summary

Research to date on regulatory fit outcomes involves investigating either performance (Keller & Bless, 2006; Shah et al., 1998) or fit sensitivity (Higgins, 2002; Higgins, Idson, Freitas, Spiegal, & Molden, 2003; Hong & Lee, 2007; Khajehzadeh et al., 2014). The current study sought to investigate both behavior and fit sensitivity. In the current study, I intended to demonstrate that regulatory fit produces fit sensitivity effects, and that individuals in a state of regulatory fit are more accurate decision-makers than individuals in a state of non-fit. The current study utilized a hiring simulation as the experimental task in the attempt to validate regulatory fit, simultaneously using fit sensitivity and task performance criteria.

In the current study, regulatory focus and goal pursuit strategy was primed prior to completing a task in which participants made hiring recommendations for police officer applicant profiles. The application profiles reflected four different applicant types: applicants with an elevated probability of on-the-job success, applicants with an elevated probability of on-the-job failure, and two types of minimally acceptable applicants (i.e. high-risk/variable-reward and low-risk/consistent-reward). Minimally acceptable "high-risk/variable-reward" applicant profiles were constructed to have greater variability in their qualifications, with some high and low scores on the different predictors, whereas, minimally acceptable "low-risk/consistent-

reward" applicant profiles were constructed to have lesser variability in their qualifications, with qualifications tending to be slightly above average.

Fit sensitivity was determined by examining the ratings of suitability for each applicant profile and the number of high risk/variable reward and low risk/consistent-reward applicant profiles recommended to be hired, when choosing 12 applicant profiles to recommend. The expectation was that individuals in a state of promotion-fit (prevention-fit) would rate and recommend to hire the high risk/variable reward (low risk/consistent-reward) applicant as more qualified. Decision accuracy was operationalized as the number of applicants with an elevated probability of on-the-job success that the participant recommended to hire.

Literature review

Regulatory focus is a motivation theory based on the premise of two motivational orientations: avoiding failure in a prevention-focus orientation and seeking success in a promotion-focus orientation (Higgins, 1997). When an individual's regulatory focus aligns with his/ her goal pursuit strategy "regulatory fit" is achieved (Higgins, 2002). In a state of prevention-fit, vigilant goal pursuit aligns with prevention-focus and in a state of promotion-fit, eager goal pursuits aligns with promotion-focus. Regulatory fit has been validated using many different types of dependent variables (Higgins, 2002; Hong & Lee, 2007; Jarzebowski et al., 2012; Keller & Bless, 2006). These dependent variables can be categorized as fit sensitivity and performance. Fit sensitivity variables are internal processes as a reflection of regulatory fit without external evaluations. There are many different types of fit sensitivity variables including valuing objects, attitude development, motivation/engagement, behavioral intentions, and behavior. Performance refers to reflecting ineffective and effective performance. Most research examines either fit sensitivity or performance, but the current study examined both fit sensitivity,

through attitude development and behavioral intentions, and performance, through decision accuracy.

Regulatory Focus

Promotion regulatory focus is about seeking success while prevention regulatory focus is about avoiding failure (Higgins, 2002). Whether an individual is chronically promotion-/prevention-focused or primed to be promotion-/prevention-focused does not change the strength of regulatory fit effects (Forster, Higgins, & Idson, 1998; Freitas, Liberman, Salovey, & Higgins, 2002). Just as individuals in a state of promotion or prevention focus differ in approach and avoid tendencies, other distinct attributes have been linked to individuals in a promotion and prevention focused state. For example, Crowe and Higgins (1997) identified participants as either promotion- or prevention-focused and found that promotion-focused individuals performed better on tasks where criteria focused on "doing more" (e.g., doing more anagrams) and prevention-focused individuals performed better on tasks where the criterion focused on being careful and avoiding mistakes (e.g., counting backward in increments of six and nine).

Idson, Liberman, and Higgins. (2004) investigated reactions to hypothetical positive and negative outcomes as a function of motivational orientation state. The first study is representative of the main conclusions for both studies. In this study, participants were asked to imagine buying a book. Regulatory focus was manipulated by framing the purchase of this book in either penalty or discount context; participants were told there was either a $5 penalty when paying with credit card or a $5 discount when paying with cash.

In the promotion-focused discount condition, participants were either asked how it would feel if they paid in cash and got the discount or did not and loss the discount. In the prevention-focused penalty condition, participants were asked how they would feel if they paid with card

and had the penalty or with cash and avoided the penalty. As expected, promotion-focused participant had greater positive attitudes when receiving the cash discount and prevention-focused participants had greater positive attitudes when avoiding the credit card penalty.

Regulatory focus and risk-taking. Promotion/prevention regulatory focus has been connected to risk taking/risk-avoidant behaviors (Bryant & Dunford, 2008; Kuhberger & Wiener, 2012; Zou, Scholer, Higgins, 2014). For example, Hamstra, Bolderdijk, and Veldstra (2011) conducted two studies of risk-taking and regulatory focus. In study one, Hamstra et al. (2011), found that chronically promotion-focused individuals drove faster and had more speeding violations than individuals chronically prevention-focused. Their second study used the "gap acceptance" driving simulation where participants had to turn left to avoid oncoming traffic. The gap between each successive car systematically increased (by 1 sec) and faster turns (less of a time gap between cars) was the measure of risk-taking. Results were similar to the first study, promotion-focused participants turned left more quickly than individuals who were in a prevention-focused state, demonstrating risker behavior from individuals operating under promotion regulatory focus (Hamstra et al., 2011).

Over four studies, Zou et al. (2014) examined regulatory focus, both primed and chronic, regarding to tendencies to make risky stock decisions. Participants received feedback that their initial investment led to no change, a small gain, or a large gain. The researchers found individuals in a promotion-focused state, who believed they had not made any or just a small profit, made riskier stock choices. However, individuals with a prevention-focus maintained a low risk approach, attempting to continue in a no loss position (Zou et al., 2014). Importantly, effects were comparable regardless whether regulatory focus was measured or manipulated.

Zou and Scholer (2016), in three studies, continued to demonstrate the propensity for individuals in a promotion-focused state to seek risks and those in a prevention-focused state to avoid them. Specifically, they investigated risk-taking across 6 domains (health/safety, ethics, recreation, gambling, investment, and social). Key findings showed those in a prevention-focus state generally avoided risk-taking regardless of the possible gain while promotion individuals did take risks when there was a gain/loss ratio that was higher than one. Perceived gains only mattered when an individual was promotion-focused.

In regulatory focus research, it is assumed that goal pursuit strategies naturally align with regulatory focus. Eager goal pursuits align with promotion-focus and vigilant goal pursuit strategies align with prevention-focus. . Regulatory fit is experienced when regulatory focus and goal pursuit are aligned (Cesario et al., 2008; Higgins, 2002; Higgins et al. 2003). However, to validate the regulatory fit argument, it is necessary to compare differences in behavior as a function of sustaining fit and disrupting fit, what is collectively known as regulatory fit research.

Regulatory Fit

The experience of regulatory fit causes a state of "feeling right" that is akin to a feeling of correctness or regulatory smoothness (Sassenberg, Jonas, Shah & Brazy, 2007). Feeling right leads to many different outcomes of regulatory fit. Regulatory fit theory has been validated using two types of dependent variables, fit sensitivity, and task performance. Fit sensitivity dependent variables are attitudes or behaviors that reflect the alignment of regulatory focus and goal pursuits. Task performance dependent variables are behaviors evaluated in terms of correctness or effectiveness.

Fit sensitivity. Fit sensitivity encompasses all regulatory fit dependent variables that do not reflect ineffective and effective performance. Examples of fit sensitivity dependent variable

constructs include valuing objects, attitude development, motivation/engagement, behavioral intentions, and behaviors.

Valuing objects. A classic fit sensitivity dependent variable studied is appraisal of an object's value as a function of regulatory fit. Operating in a state of regulatory fit tends to increase the perceived value of an object (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Higgins et al. 2003; Wu & Hsu, 2015). For example, in study 1 of Higgins' et al. (2003) participants were told they would receive a gift (mug or pen) for completing a task. Chronic regulatory focus was measured and participants then choose between an expensive mug and an inexpensive pen; i.e., almost all the subjects choose the coffee mug. The participants were then instructed to think about choosing their gift in either an eager (what they would gain by choosing each item) or vigilant (what they would lose by not choosing each item) manner, after which the participants were asked to estimate the cost of the mug, having been told the pen cost $3. Participants in a state of fit (both promotion and prevention), assigned a higher price to the mug than participants in a state of non-fit. Studies 2 and 3 replicated the findings for study 1 using a different operational definition of value (i.e., how much money would you pay for the mug) in study 2 and using a different operational definition of regulatory focus in study 3.

Attitude development. Attitude formation or development is another fit sensitivity outcome (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004; Sassenberg et al. 2007). Lee and Aaker (2004) examined the effects of regulatory fit on advertisement effectiveness over 6 individual studies. In the first study, researchers examined the persuasiveness of grape juice ads depending on the combination of gains/loss framed taglines paired with a promotion/prevention-focused advertising appeal. Their measurement of persuasiveness was a "brand attitude scale" that measured positive and negative attitudes about grape juice. Promotion regulatory focus was primed by reading an ad

that highlighted health benefits of drinking grape juice; whereas, prevention regulatory focus was primed by reading an ad that concentrated on highlighting how drinking grape juice prevents adverse health outcomes.

Each ad had an associated tag line that primed goal pursuit strategy; for the promotion-ad fit was created by the eager tagline "Get energized!" and non-fit was created by the vigilant tagline "Don't miss out on getting energized." For the prevention-ad, non-fit was created by the eager tagline "Prevent clogged arteries!" and fit was created by the vigilant tagline "Don't miss out on preventing clogged arteries!" Lee and Aaker's (2004) findings indicated that ads were more persuasive when the advertisement wording created a state of fit. The other five studies differed in product type as well as modeling other variables (e.g. perceived risk and processing fluency); however, results from each study supported regulatory fit theory. Lin and Shen (2012) also examined regulatory fit and framing of advertisements. Regulatory focus was manipulated through priming tasks and regulatory fit was created by framing shampoo advertisements as either gains ("stay one step ahead of fashion") or losses ("don't be left behind by fashion"). The researchers found that participants in a state of fit had greater positive attitudes about the shampoo than participants in a state of non-fit.

Motivation/engagement. Task motivation increases when individuals are in a state of regulatory fit (Cesario et al., 2008; Jarzebowski et al., 2012; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007). For example, Jarzebowski et al. (2012) examined the effects of regulatory promotion fit on motivation after experiencing positive feedback. In this study, all participants experienced a promotion-focused prime. After taking part in a leadership development exercise, participants then received positive feedback on the task, with the structure and main concepts of the feedback remaining the same for each group of participants. Framing and word choice (e.g., "ideal score"

for eager and "carefully avoiding" for vigilant) were used to manipulate the nature of the positive feedback. Jarzebowski et al. (2012) found that self-report motivation to improve was greater when feedback was eagerly-framed as opposed to vigilantly-framed.

   Behavioral intentions. Behavioral intentions is a common regulatory fit dependent variable in consumer research (e.g., Ashraf, Thongpapanl, & Razzaque, 2016; Hsu & Chen, 2014; Khajehzadeh et al., 2014). For example, in 2014, Hsu and Chen examined regulatory fit and behavioral intentions to purchase organic food. Chronic regulatory focus was measured and regulatory fit was created by framing information about organic food in either gain/loss terms. Relative to participants in state of non-fit, Hsu and Chen found that participants experiencing regulatory fit had greater intentions to purchase organic food than participants in a state of non-fit.

   Behavior. Finally, behavior is also used as a fit sensitivity dependent variable. For example, Spiegel, Grant-Pillow, and Higgins (2004) investigated the effect of regulatory fit on two different behaviors. In the first study, chronic regulatory focus was measured and goal pursuit was primed. At the completion of the experimental session, participants were asked to write and return a report a later date; participants experiencing regulatory fit were 50% more likely to turn in the report than participants experiencing non-fit. In Spiegel et al.'s (2004) second study, participants were given health-related messages to eat more vegetables; the promotion-focused message centered on accomplishments related to eating more vegetables, while prevention-focused message focused on the safety and preventative aspects of eating vegetables. Fit was created by adding either a benefit- eating the "right" food or a cost-focused consequence for not eating the "right" food. Participants' vegetable intake was recorded in a self-

report daily journal and participants experiencing fit in the laboratory reported eating more vegetables than participants experiencing non-fit.

Summary of fit sensitivity. The distinguishing aspect of fit sensitivity variables from task performance is the absence of a qualitative evaluation. Fit sensitivity variables reflect the internal processes occurring when in a state of regulatory fit (e.g. attitude development, behavior, or behavioral intentions). Typically, regulatory fit research does not focus on the differences in fit sensitivity for promotion and prevention fit; in the current study I seek to demonstrate differences in fit sensitivity but equal performance between promotion and prevention fit.

Performance.

Using objective measures of performance, researchers have shown that regulatory fit states increase performance as compared to non-fit states (Keller & Bless, 2006; Plessner, Unkelbach, Memmert, Baltes, & Kolb, 2009; Shah et al., 1998). In 2006, Keller and Bless examined regulatory fit in relation to performance on a math and spatial ability test. In the first study, after measuring regulatory focus, participants read that the "test was designed to indicate exceptionally strong math ability but was not indicative of weak ability" or that the "test would indicate exceptionally weak math ability but was not indicative of strong ability" (pp. 397). The former creating fit with promotion focus and the latter with prevention focus. Keller and Bless (2006) found that participants in a state of regulatory fit scored higher on the math test than participants in a state of non-fit. In the second study, Keller and Bless (2006) created fit by varying strategies for participants to use when responding to test items, "try to solve as many test items as possible" versus "try to avoid mistakes". Again, participants a state of fit out- performed participants in a state of non-fit (a spatial reasoning test was used in study 2).

In the sports context, Plessner et al. (2009) investigated regulatory fit in relation to soccer penalty shooting. After measuring regulatory focus, participants were told: ''you are going to shoot five penalties. Your aspiration is to score at least three times.'' or ''You are going to shoot five penalties. Your obligation is not to miss more than two times.'' Results indicated that those in regulatory fit scored more penalty kicks that those is a state of non-fit.

Decision Accuracy. Decision accuracy refers to a variable measuring the correctness of a multi-cue decision based on predetermined criteria for incorrect and correct answers. Although decision accuracy has not been examined in regulatory fit research, I chose to use decision accuracy as the measure of task performance for two reasons. First, decision accuracy is the dependent variable examined in other research areas (Paquette, & Kida, 1988; Speier et al., 2003). In eyewitness testimonies, decision accuracy is a very important variable examined, due to the consequence of an incorrect decision (Sporer, 1993; Sporer et al., 1995). Secondly, decision accuracy is an important criterion in the organizational context, e.g., organizational effectiveness is significantly improved when accurately identifying the applicants most likely to succeed after being hired (Marcus, 2006; Middendorf & Macan, 2002).

More generally, decision accuracy is a more cognitively complex dependent performance measure than past fit research has included (Shah et al., 1998; Keller et al., 2006). For instance, Shah et al. 1998 included a performance measure in their regulatory fit study, but their measure was based on unscrambling words to form new words (anagrams). This type of performance measure is less applicable to abilities needed in the workplace, whereas decision-making is needed in most work contexts. Therefore, due to decision accuracy's prominent presence in performance research and its applicability to the workplace, decision accuracy was the performance measure in the current study.

Overview

Past research has demonstrated that individuals in a promotion-focused state are more inclined to take risks for rewards while individuals in a prevention-focused state avoid risk taking (Bryant & Dunford, 2008; Kuhberger & Wiener, 2012; Zou et al. 2014). Additionally, past regulatory fit research illustrates the enhancing effects that a fit-state has in many different dependent variables from attitude development (Lee & Aaker, 2004) to increased performance (Keller & Bless, 2006).

Unlike past regulatory fit research, the current study included both a fit sensitivity and task performance dependent variable. Through this design, the current study sought to demonstrate that both promotion and prevention fit, though different in fit sensitivity indicators, can lead to equal performance. Additionally, the current study examined a new regulatory fit outcome of performance: decision accuracy.

The current study attempted to validate regulatory fit using a hiring simulation where participants must evaluate multiple cues (i.e., applicant qualifications). This task required participants to rate the suitability and recommend applicant profiles to be hired for the job of police officer. The profiles were constructed to include four types of applicant profiles: applicants with an elevated probability of on-the-job success, applicants with an elevated probability of on-the-job failure, applicants with a high-risk/variable-reward and applicants with a low-risk/consistent-reward. Fit sensitivity was determined by examining the suitability ratings of and the number of high-risk/variable-reward and low-risk/consistent-reward applicants the participants recommend to hire, when choosing 12 applicants. Performance was measured by examining the number applicants recommended to be hired with an elevated probability of success.

Hypotheses

1. Individuals in a state of regulatory fit will exhibit greater fit sensitivity than individuals in a state of non-fit.

    1a. Individuals in a state of promotion/eager regulatory fit will exhibit greater preference for risky choices than individuals in a state of prevention/vigilant regulatory fit.

    2a. Individuals in a state of prevention/vigilant regulatory fit will exhibit greater preference for less risky choices than individuals in a state of promotion/eager regulatory fit.

2. Individuals in a state of regulatory fit will exhibit greater decision accuracy than individuals in a state of non-fit.

Methods

Participants

There was a total of 143 participants, recruited from a public university in the southern region of the United States. Participants were recruited through SONA and received extra credit for participation.

Design

This study was a two (Motivational Orientation) X two (Goal Pursuit) between subjects' factorial. Power analysis using G*Power (Erdfelder, Faul & Buchner, 1996) was used based on a moderate effect size (i.e., Cohens F = .3), Type I error = .05 and Type II error = 2.8. A moderate effect size was chosen because of the well-established effect of regulatory fit, for example, a meta-analysis in 2011 found that regulatory fit had significant effects in many different areas (Grewal, Motyka, Puccinelli, Roggeveen, Daryanto, Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2011).

Results of the power analysis indicated adequate power was achieved with a sample of at least 128 participants. The 0.3 effect was used as a conservative estimate of regulatory fit effects.

Experimental Task

The experimental task was a hiring simulation; participants were asked to review 24 police applicant profiles. The job title of police officer was chosen for two reasons. First, police officer is a widely recognized job, often portrayed in the media and movies, thereby suggesting an average person has a general understanding of what a police officer does. Second, police officer selection involves multiple attributes, e.g., physical abilities, aptitude, and personality traits. The availability of multiple attributes makes the decision process more nuanced thereby increasing the likelihood of regulatory fit effects.

Nine attributes were included in each applicant profile: age, education level, police-related work experience, physical ability, aptitude, extraversion, agreeableness, consciousness, and emotional stability (See Appendix A). Except for age, education level, and police-related work experience, all attributes were expressed as a percentile score located on a bell curve to help participants visualize where each applicant falls on each distribution. These attributes were determined from surveying types of tests police applicants take (e.g. the physical fitness test) and different job ads for police officers. Additionally, when deciding what to include on the profiles, I focused on choosing attributes that could be varied, such as personality. There were six elevated probability of on-the-job success applicants, six elevated probability of on-the-job failure applicants, six high-risk/variable-reward applicants, and six low-risk/consistent-reward applicants.

Pilot Studies. Two pilot studies were conducted to create the applicant profiles. The first pilot study (n = 54) included only 18 applicant profiles. Participants were given 3 examples of

good and bad applicant profiles. The good profiles were designed to be clearly qualified and the bad profiles were designed to be clearly not qualified. These good and bad profiles are different from the final set of elevated probability of on-the-job success applicants and the elevated probability of on-the-job failure applicants mention previously. After viewing the six example applicant profiles, participants were asked to rate the likelihood, on a 6-point Likert scale (0 to 5), they would hire the remaining 12 applicant profiles, six of which were constructed as low risk-consistent reward, and six high-risk-variable reward applicants.

Participants were also asked which applicant characteristic had the greatest influence in their hiring recommendations (see *Table* 1). This was also on a 6-point Likert Scale (0 to 5). We found that age mattered the least (*M*= 2.25 *SD*=1.37; age of the applicant profiles ranged from 21 to 40) and that emotional stability (*M*= 4.20 *SD*=0.95) mattered the most. After running a paired samples t-test, age was rated significantly less important than emotional stability (*f*= -8.975, *p*<.001). The other attributes were rated between age and Emotional Stability, with Extraversion being the rated the lowest (*M*= 3.16*SD*=.87) and Conscientiousness being rated the highest (*M*= 3.88 *SD*=.87). Based on the results of the first pilot study, 8 applicant profiles were designed to reflect each of the four categories of applicants, i.e., elevated probability of on-the-job success applicants, elevated probability of on-the-job failure applicants, high-risk/variable-reward applicants, and low-risk/consistent-reward applicants, making a total of 32 applicant profiles.

In the second pilot study (*N*=187), participants were instructed to estimate the likelihood that each of the 32 profiled applicants will fail at being a police officer. This was measured 0 to 100, a change from the original Likert-scale of 0 to 5, to examine the likelihood of failure in terms of percentages. The results (see *Figure* 1) were examined to finalize decisions about which

applicant profiles to use in the focal study. Additionally, this pilot study checked to make sure the low/risk consistent-reward applicants and the high-risk/ variable-reward applicants fell in the middle of the distribution of means.

After examining the mean ratings for each applicant profile, two applicant profiles were eliminated from each category due to the means not falling in the appropriate distribution as described above. For instance, two high-risk/variable-reward applicants were eliminated due to the means falling in with the elevated probability of on-the-job failure applicant profiles. Similarly, two low risk/consistent-reward applicant profiles were eliminated for the means falling in with the elevated probability of on-the-job success applicant profiles. Two elevated probability of on-the-job failure and success applicant profiles were also eliminated to create the desired distribution. The final alteration made to create the desirable applicant profile distribution was to alter one high-risk/variable reward to lessen his/her credentials and one low risk-high reward applicant profile to improve his/her credentials. After elimination and alteration of the applicant profiles there were 24 total applicant profiles, six in each category.

Procedure

Participants participated in a laboratory environment, in groups of 5 or less. Upon entering the lab, participants signed informed consent. Next regulatory focus was manipulated through a task-unrelated writing assignment. Participants then read task instructions and goal pursuit was manipulated by variations in the task instructions.

Participants were shown a blank applicant profile template to familiarize themselves with the profile format. Participants were then instructed to review 24 one-page applicant profiles, which were presented in a random order for each participant. After reviewing all of the profiles, participants were instructed to rate the suitability of each applicant for the job of a police officer.

Next, participants were instructed to identify 12 applicants they recommend to be hired and to further identify the six best applicants from among their 12 recommended hires. Participants were then take a demographic survey and then be debriefed about the purpose of the study and offered to be informed of the results. Participants were then be thanked for their participation.

Independent Variables

      Regulatory Focus. Promotion/prevention-focus were manipulated based on a task developed by Freitas and Higgins (2002). In the promotion condition, participants were asked to: "Describe how your hopes and aspirations are different now from when you were growing up." For the prevention priming prompt, "hopes and aspirations" was be replaced with the words "duties and obligations" (Freitas & Higgins, 2002, pg 2). Additionally, participants were asked to further explain one hope/duty. Participants were given as much time as they need.

      Goal Pursuit Strategy. Goal pursuit strategy was manipulated using the instructions for the focal task. Every participant received the following instructions:

> Police officer is an important job in every community. You will be reviewing and rating the suitability of 24 applicants to perform the job of police officer; you will also identify 12 applicants that you recommend be offered a job as police officer, and finally, you will identify 6 applicants you would hire if you could only recommend 6 for the job.

In the eager goal pursuit condition, the following phrase was at the end of the above statement: *"Through this entire process your end goal is always to identify the applicants most likely to succeed as a police officer."* In the vigilant goal pursuit condition, the instructions ended with the statement: *"Through this entire process your end goal is always to identify the applicants least likely to fail as a police officer."*

Dependent Variables

      Fit Sensitivity suitability ratings. There were two fit sensitivity measurements: attitude development and behavioral intention. The participant rating of the suitability of each applicant

for the job of a police officer was the attitude development fit sensitivity measure. The rating was on a Likert scale of 1 to 7. Specifically, attitude development was determined by averaging the rating of suitability for each high-risk/ variable reward applicant profile and for each low-risk/consistent reward applicant profile.

Fit Sensitivity Applicants Recommended to be Hired. The number of high-risk/ variable reward applicant profiles and low-risk/consistent reward applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants, when asked to recommend 12 applicants, was the behavioral intentions fit sensitivity measure.

Decision accuracy. Decision accuracy was calculated by summing the total number of correct applicant profiles chosen when choosing 12 applicant profiles to recommend to hire.

Other Measured Variables

Demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire asked the participants' age, gender, and degree of familiarity with the occupation of a police officer.

Time. The time that it took to rate all of the 24 applicant profiles suitability. Time was recorded using the Qualtrics time function. The overall time was determined by summing each individual time taken to rate each applicant profile.

Results

Of the 143 total participants: 38 were in the vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus condition, 37 were in the vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus condition, 36 were in the eager goal pursuit and promotion focus condition, and 32 were in the eager goal pursuit and prevention focus condition. See Table 2 for descriptive statistics. Table 3 has the correlation matrix for all dependent variables across conditions and Table 4 and 5 has the correlation matrix for dependent variables broken down by condition. There were no specific expectations for the

correlations. The significant correlations between the dependent variables, though not predicted are not surprising. Although the 24 applicant profiles were created to be different and differences in ratings were expected, correlated scores are also expected due to participants rating tendencies (e.g. rating all the applicants on the lower side) carrying over to all 24 applicant profiles. After examining the Police Attitude correlations and finding non-significant correlations with the dependent variables, the Police Attitude Scale was left out of subsequence analysis.

Suitability ratings

High-risk/variable-reward. There were no effects for the 2 (regulatory focus) by 2 (goal pursuit strategy) ANOVA for high-risk variable-reward applicant profiles. Additionally, the means were not aligned with expectations from hypothesis 1. Eager goal pursuit strategy and prevention focus had the highest mean rating of 25.5 (*SD*=4.14) followed by vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus (*M*=24.63, *SD*=3.7), then vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus (*M*=24.5, *SD*= 4.6) and finally eager goal pursuit and promotion focus (*M*=23.6, *SD*=4.7). When calculating a protected t-test for eager goal pursuit and promotion focus to vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus, there was not a significant difference, *t*(139)=.144, thusly not supporting hypothesis 1a.

Low-risk/consistent-reward. When examining the 2 (regulatory focus) by 2 (goal pursuit strategy) ANOVA for the low-risk consistent-reward applicants, the interaction between goal pursuit strategy and regulatory focus was not significant. However, the means were in line with hypotheses, with vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus having the highest ratings of 27.26 (SD=4.7), followed by vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus *M*=25.9 (*SD*= 3.7), then Eager goal pursuit and promotion focus *M*=25.6 (*SD*= 3.7), and finally eager goal pursuit and prevention focus *M*=25.1 (*SD*=5.1). After examining a protected t-test between vigilant goal

pursuit and prevention focus to eager goal pursuit and promotion focus there was not a significant difference, $t(139)$=-.084, not supporting hypothesis 1b.

Exploratory Analyses of Suitability Ratings. In order to further examine the effect of fit, a complex contrast was conducted that compared suitability ratings in the vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus to the aggregate of eager goal pursuit and promotion focus, vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus, and eager goal pursuit and prevention focus. This contrast was examined because it aligned to regulatory focus theory. According to theory prevention fit should have the highest ratings for the low risk/consistent reward applicant profiles across all of the fit and non-fit states, due to those in a state of prevention fit wanting to avoid risk. Therefore an aggregation of the two non-fit states and promotion fit, and comparing that to prevention fit is still examining the general idea of fit sensitivity that depending on an individual's state of regulatory fit he or she will be differentially sensitive to tasks, situations, and objects. Additionally, the means were in line with this theory. This was a significant contrast, $t(139)$=2.14, $p = .017$. Similarity, eager goal pursuit and promotion focus was compared to the aggregate of vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus, and eager goal pursuit and prevention focus, and vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus. However, this was not a significant contrast, $t(139)$=1.23, $p = .30$.

To better understand the results, the suitability ratings for each individual applicant profile were examined in relation to the fit prediction. When examining the means for the low-risk/consistent reward applicant profiles, the ordering of mean suitability ratings were consistent with the fit prediction, i.e. suitability ratings in the prevention-vigilant condition means were always greater than the other three condition means, but the effects were small, ranging from 0 to 0.028. The applicant profiles with the smallest effect size were dropped and applicant suitability

was recomputed. A 2 (goal pursuit) by 2 (regulatory focus) ANOVA for low-risk/ consistent-reward applicant profiles (see table 6) indicated a marginally significant goal pursuit and regulatory focus interaction $F(1, 139)=3.085$ $p = .081$. The means were in the expected direction with vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus having the highest rating, $M=18.84$, followed by eager goal pursuit and promotion focus, $M=17.67$, $SD= 2.72$, then Vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus, $M=17.59$, $SD=2.69$, and finally Eager goal pursuit and prevention non-fit, $M=17.13$, $SD=3.63$ (see Figure 2).

When examining the high-risk/variable-reward applicant profiles, they were almost never in line with expected means, eager goal pursuit and promotion focus typically did not have the highest ratings on the applicant profiles. Given it was clear that the regulatory fit prediction was not supported, no further analyses were conducted.

Hiring Recommendations.

Risk/reward applicant profiles. For the number of high-risk/variable-reward applicant profiles recommended to be hired, $F(1, 139)=5.27$, $p = .023$ there was a goal pursuit main effect for hiring recommendations for 2 (focus) by 2 (goal pursuit) ANOVA (See Table 7). There were no significant effects or interactions for regulatory focus and goal pursuit strategy on low-risk/ variable-reward.

Decision accuracy. A 2 (goal pursuit strategy) by 2 (regulatory focus) ANOVA for decision accuracy was examined (see Table 8). There were no main effects nor was the interaction of goal pursuit and regulatory focus significant for decision accuracy. When examining the suitability ratings for the applicant profiles considered to have an elevated chance of failure, there was an approaching significant fit effect F(1, 138) = 3.54 $p=.067$, however when

examining the means, those in fit rated these incorrect applicant higher than those in non-fit; therefore, not supporting hypothesis 2.

Exploratory Analysis of Time to Process

Although there was not a specific prediction about processing time, we also tested for fit effects using the participants time spent to render the suitability ratings; the interaction effect for the 2 (regulatory focus) by 2 (goal pursuit) ANOVA approached significance, $F(1, 138) = 3.5$, $p=.063$, partial $\eta^2=.03$ (see Table 9). From examining the means, participants in a state of fit took less time to choose applicants to recommend to hire than those in a state of non-fit. After comparing fit to non-fit in a Scheffe's contrast, a significant difference was found $F(1, 139)= 10.7$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 3).

Discussion

The goal of the current study was to test regulatory focus/fit predictions for both fit sensitivity and task performance in a single task. There was limited support for the predicted fit sensitivity effects, and no support for fit effects on task performance as measured by decision accuracy. The partial support for fit was found with the prevention – vigilant providing greater suitability ratings than the other motivational orientation-goal pursuit combinations for low-risk / consistent-reward applicant profiles. An exploratory analysis was also conducted on the total time it took to rate the applicants' suitability. Interestingly, there was a general support for fit effects in that participants in a state of fit took less time to rate the profiles than participants in a state of non-fit. This is consistent with regulatory fit literature in that individuals in a state of fit experience a smoothness of regulation (Sassenberg et al., 2007) and it is this smoothness that may have allowed for those in a state of fit to rate applicant suitability faster than those individuals in a state of non-fit.

Given the extensive evidence that regulatory fit is a robust phenomenon across a wide range of contexts (Higgins, 1997; 2001; 2002; 2004; Hong & Lee, 2008; Sassenberg, et al., 2007), the primary issue is why fit effects were small or non-existent in the current study. The first issue to explore is the moderating effect of applicant type on fit effects. The first potential consideration in explaining these differing effects are the unique aspects in the current study compared to the typical regulatory fit study. Specifically, the applicant simulation task is much more complex than tasks typically used in regulatory fit studies. The current study implemented a task with multiple cues for the individuals to consider (e.g. age, experience, etc.). The task require participants make a decision based on many cues, and it also required participants to judge the suitability of 24 applicant profiles. While common regulatory fit tasks typically involve simple decisions such as, assigning monetary value to a coffee mug (Higgins, 2000; 2002; 2003), deciding how to feel about a negative or positive outcome (Idson et al., 2004), choosing between two types of snacks to eat (Hong & Lee, 2008), and decisions about whether or not to buy product or how favorable they are about a product (Lee & Aaker, 2004). In the case of deciding whether or not to buy a product, even if there is complex information about the product, there is still only one product to evaluate while in the current study's task, as previously mentioned, participants were required to evaluate 24 complex profiles.

In addition to the typical regulatory fit study involving simpler decisions than the current study, the differences in fit effects found within the current study support the idea that complexity of task may be a moderating factor. There were differences in complexity based on the type of applicant profile. The high-risk/ variable-reward applicant profiles are arguably even more complicated than the low-risk/ consistent-reward applicant profiles due to the increase in variability across applicant profiles and the need to integrate this variability across the applicant

profile elements. Regulatory fit is a robust effect but it is also easy to disrupt, meaning that, in a lab condition, the complexity of the task, if high enough, may cause disruption of fit effects.

However, it is difficult to integrate the observed fit effects for time into the task complexity moderator argument. The initial expectation is that participants in the more complex, high-risk/ variable reward condition would take longer to produce the suitability ratings than participants in the less complex, low-risk/consistent reward condition, i.e., a main effect for applicant profile type on time instead of a regulatory fit effect. However, there is an alternative argument that suggests the fit effect for time is consistent with the complexity argument. Promotion fit individuals tend to be less detail oriented than individuals in a state of prevention fit (Kark & Dijk, 2007). Additionally Dijk and Kluger (2011) deem detail oriented tasks as prevention tasks. In fact they even examined this task time as a moderator for regulatory fit. As such, task complexity may moderate fit effects for fit sensitivity variables while not affecting fit effects on processing time.

Concerns revolve around the construction of the applicant selection simulation may be another reason for the lack of fit results. When examining individual profiles there were some profiles which supported fit sensitivity and some profiles which did not. This indicates that with some refinement it may be possible to improve the existing profiles. Additionally, there was little variance in decision accuracy scores. The lowest score was a 9 out of a possible 12 and the mean fell at 11.5 with the small standard deviation of 0.72. This indicates that the performance task did not allow for enough differences in scores for the effect of regulatory fit to occur. It may be that the profiles were constructed in a way that too clearly indicated that the applicant would fail or succeed as a police officer.

Future Directions

The original intent of this research study was to show fit effects for both task performance and fit sensitivity variables. It may be that the selection simulation task is not well-suited to produce the desired fit effects. Tasks that involve monetary risk may be well-suited. For example, an investment task where individuals regulate both risky and non-risky strategies and both strategies can result in success (Florack, & Hartmann, 2007). Also, a strategic gambling task where there are clear incorrect and correct options as well as risky/play it safe moves.

A possible future direction is the testing task complexity as a moderator of regulatory fit. For example, the selection simulation task could be made less complex by providing fewer cues and/or fewer applicants to review. Additionally, I would need to determine a way to keep the variability in the high-risk variable-reward applicant profiles while also making it less complex. This would involve more pilot testing and a more systematic way of altering the attributes included to create the high-risk/ variable-reward and low-risk/ consistent reward applicant profiles. This may involve systematically creating a list of attributes considered high-risk, low-risk, favorable, and unfavorable and rotating combinations of these attributes to form statistically equivalent profiles, (see Louviere, Hensher, & Swait, 2000). The underlying goal here would be to determine if regulatory fit itself is effected by task complexity, or if it is simply a product of promotion fit individuals tendency to pay less attention to detail.

Finally, this study was originally created with the intent of using its applicant selection task in a physiological study on regulatory fit. The goal of this study would be to examine what occurs physiologically when individuals are in a state of fit versus non-fit, specifically, examining cardiac outputs such as the pre-ejection period (PEP). The results of the current study suggest that selection simulation task is not well-suited for the physiological study. The overarching goal for this future area of research would be to examine what happens when

individuals are experiencing "feeling right" and even how long these effects manifest physiologically.

Conclusion

Although regulatory focus is a robust phenomenon, the current study did not show the expected fit effects. The goal of the study was to examine both fit sensitivity effects of regulatory fit while also examining performance. Although this goal is important for developing regulatory focus theory and literature, the current study's results also brings up a different interesting avenue of research for regulatory focus theory. This current study demonstrates the transitory nature of regulatory fit, and how easily fit can be disrupted. If complexity of the task in the current lab study led to the disruption of fit, then what does this mean for regulatory fit effects outside of the lab? Real world decisions and tasks are often complicated and complex and identifying just how complexity effects regulatory fit will help to further our understanding of how regulatory fit effects individuals outside of lab settings.

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Table 1: Mean greatest influence in participant hiring
recommendations pilot study 1

Attribute Type	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	2.27	1.37
Education	3.84	1.29
Related Experience	3.80	1.20
Physical Ability	3.44	1.23
Cognitive Ability	3.74	0.80
Extraversion	3.16	0.87
Agreeableness	3.46	0.95
Conscientiousness	3.88	0.87
Emotional Stability	4.20	0.95

Note. Scale ranged from 0 to 5 with *N*=54.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables Within Conditions

| | Prevention Focus | | | | Promotion Focus | | | |
| | Eager Goal Pursuit | | Vigilant Goal Pursuit | | Eager Goal Pursuit | | Vigilant Goal Pursuit | |
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
High-Risk Suitability Ratings	25.53	4.14	24.63	3.73	23.64	4.70	24.51	4.57
Low-Risk Suitability Ratings	25.13	5.12	27.26	4.67	25.56	3.67	25.86	3.73
High-Risk Choice	3.03	1.0	2.42	1.11	2.58	1.20	2.30	1.31
Low-Risk Choice	3.16	1.14	3.55	0.95	3.33	0.93	3.41	1.32
Decision Accuracy	5.44	0.72	5.58	0.60	5.58	0.81	5.59	0.83
Suitability Rating Time (Seconds)	395.33	241.95	307.35	96.44	322.84	118.50	330.22	124.76

Note. N=143. The low-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were low-risk/consistent reward and the high-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were high-risk/variable reward. The high-risk choice, low-risk choice, and decision accuracy was coded as either 0 (not chosen) or 1 (chosen) for each applicant profile.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for all Dependent Variables Collapsed over Conditions

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low-Risk Suitability Ratings	25.99	4.35	-	0.30**	0.23**	-0.25**	0.06	0.05	0.001
High-Risk Suitability Ratings	24.55	4.30		-	-0.29**	.40**	0.155	0.055	-0.13
Low-Risk Choice	3.37	1.09			-	-0.69**	0.23**	-0.23**	0.05
High-Risk Choice	2.57	1.18				-	.246**	0.126	0.008
Decision Accuracy	11.49	0.71					-	0.050	0.061
Suitability Rating Time	336.86	153.87						-	0.036
Police Attitude Scale	42.31	7.84							-

Note. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$ $N=143$. The low-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were low-risk/consistent reward and the high-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were high-risk/variable reward. The high-risk choice, low-risk choice, and decision accuracy was coded as either 0 (not chosen) or 1 (chosen) for each applicant profile.

Table 4. Intercorrelations for all Dependent Variables for Promotion Fit and Non-Fit

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Low-Risk Suitability Ratings	-	.424**	0.045	-0.105	-0.252	0.146
High-Risk Suitability Ratings	.480**	-	-.385*	.373*	-0.027	-0.230
Low-Risk Choice	0.028	-.346*	-	-.665**	0.325	0.076
High-Risk Choice	-0.088	.432**	-.743**	-	0.202	-0.177
Decision Accuracy	0.155	0.293	0.047	0.236	-	0.065
Suitability Rating Time	0.254	0.101	-0.045	-0.112	-0.042	-

Note: Correlations below the diagonal are for promotion fit (eager goal pursuit and promotion focus) and the correlations above the diagonal are for promotion non-fit (vigilant goal pursuit and promotion focus). *p < .05, **p < .01, with *N*=36 for promotion focus/eager goal pursuit and *N*=37 for promotion focus/vigilant goal pursuit. The high-risk choice, low-risk choice, and decision accuracy was coded as either 0 (not chosen) or 1 (chosen) for each applicant profile.

Table 5. Intercorrelations for all Dependent Variables for Prevention Fit and Non-Fit

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Low-Risk Suitability Ratings	-	0.328	0.295	-0.234	.485**	0.028
High-Risk Suitability Ratings	0.065	-	-0.210	0.315	0.147	0.177
Low-Risk Choice	.472**	-0.155	-	-.713**	.396*	-.522**
High-Risk Choice	-.477**	.451**	-.690**	-	0.017	.443*
Decision Accuracy	-0.130	0.244	0.106	.423**	-	0.041
Suitability Rating Time	0.013	0.012	-0.229	0.113	0.094	-

Note: Correlations below the diagonal are for prevention fit (vigilant goal pursuit and prevention focus) and the correlations above the diagonal are for prevention non-fit (eager goal pursuit and prevention focus). $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, with *N=38* for prevention focus/vigilant goal pursuit and *N=32* for prevention focus/eager goal pursuit. The low-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were low-risk/consistent reward and the high-risk choice is referring to the applicant profiles recommended to be hired by the participants that were high-risk/variable reward. The high-risk choice, low-risk choice, and decision accuracy was coded as either 0 (not chosen) or 1 (chosen) for each applicant profile.

Tables 6 : Regulatory Focus by Goal Pursuit for Exploratory Applicant Profiles Suitability

ratings for low-risk consistent-reward applicant profiles ANOVA

Low-Risk/ Consistent-Reward	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**	**partial η^2**
GP	24.08	1	24.08	2.608+	0.02
Focus	4.43	1	4.434	0.480	0.003
Focus*GP	28.49	1	28.49	3.085	0.022
Error	1283.47	139	9.23		

Note. + $P < 0.1$; with *N=38* for prevention focus/vigilant goal pursuit, *N=32* for

prevention focus/eager goal pursuit, *N=36* for promotion focus/eager goal pursuit and

N=37 for promotion focus/vigilant goal pursuit.

Table 7: Regulatory Focus by Goal Pursuit for High-Risk Variable-Reward Applicant

Profile's Recommended to be Hired ANOVA

	SS	df	MS	F	partial η^2
Focus	7.148	1	7.148	5.265*	0.036
GP	2.908	1	2.908	2.142	0.015
Focus*GP	0.935	1	0.935	0.689	0.005
Error	188.712	139	1.358		

Note. * P<.05, with *N=38* for prevention focus/vigilant goal pursuit, *N=32* for prevention focus/eager goal pursuit, *N=36* for promotion focus/eager goal pursuit and *N=37* for promotion focus/vigilant goal pursuit.

Table 8: Regulatory Focus by Goal Pursuit on Decision Accuracy

	SS	df	MS	F	partial η^2
Focus	0.232	1	0.232	0.420	0.003
GP	0.208	1	0.208	0.376	0.003
Focus*GP	0.151	1	0.151	0.273	0.002
Error	76.807	139	0.553		

Note. $+ P < 0.1$, with *N=38* for prevention focus/vigilant goal pursuit, *N=32* for prevention focus/eager goal pursuit, *N=36* for promotion focus/eager goal pursuit and *N=37* for promotion focus/vigilant goal pursuit.

Table 9: Regulatory Focus by Goal Pursuit for Time to Rate Applicant Suitability

	SS	df	MS	F	partial η^2
Focus	57808.062	1	57808.062	2.503	0.018
GP	21916.421	1	21916.421	0.949	0.007
Focus*GP	80925.637	1	80925.637	3.503+	0.025
Error	3210744.977	139	23098.885		

Note. $+ P < 0.1$, with *N=38* for prevention focus/vigilant goal pursuit, *N=32* for prevention focus/eager goal pursuit, *N=36* for promotion focus/eager goal pursuit and *N=37* for promotion focus/vigilant goal pursuit.
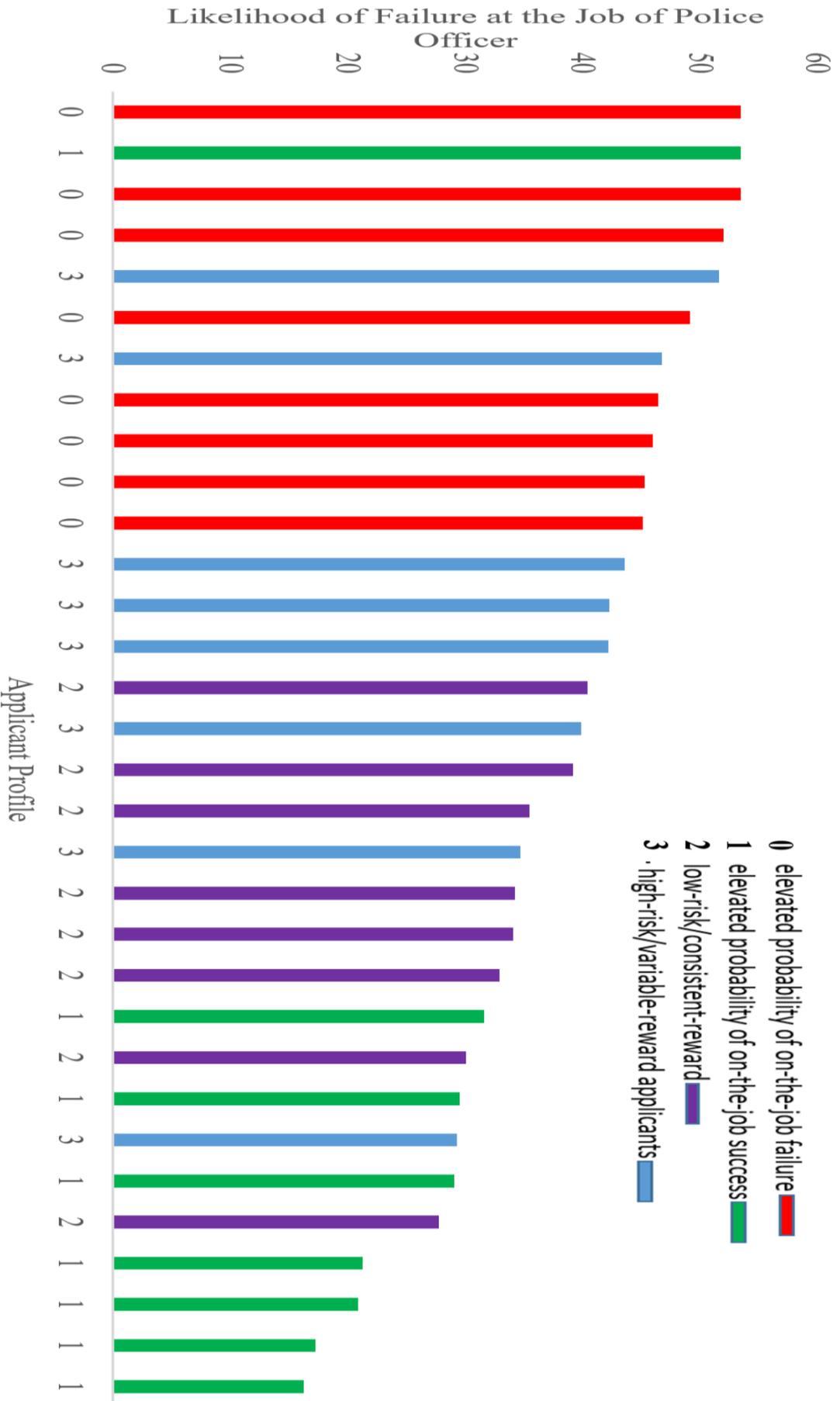
Figure 1. The distribution of means for each applicant profile on likelihood that the applicant would fail at the job of a police officer
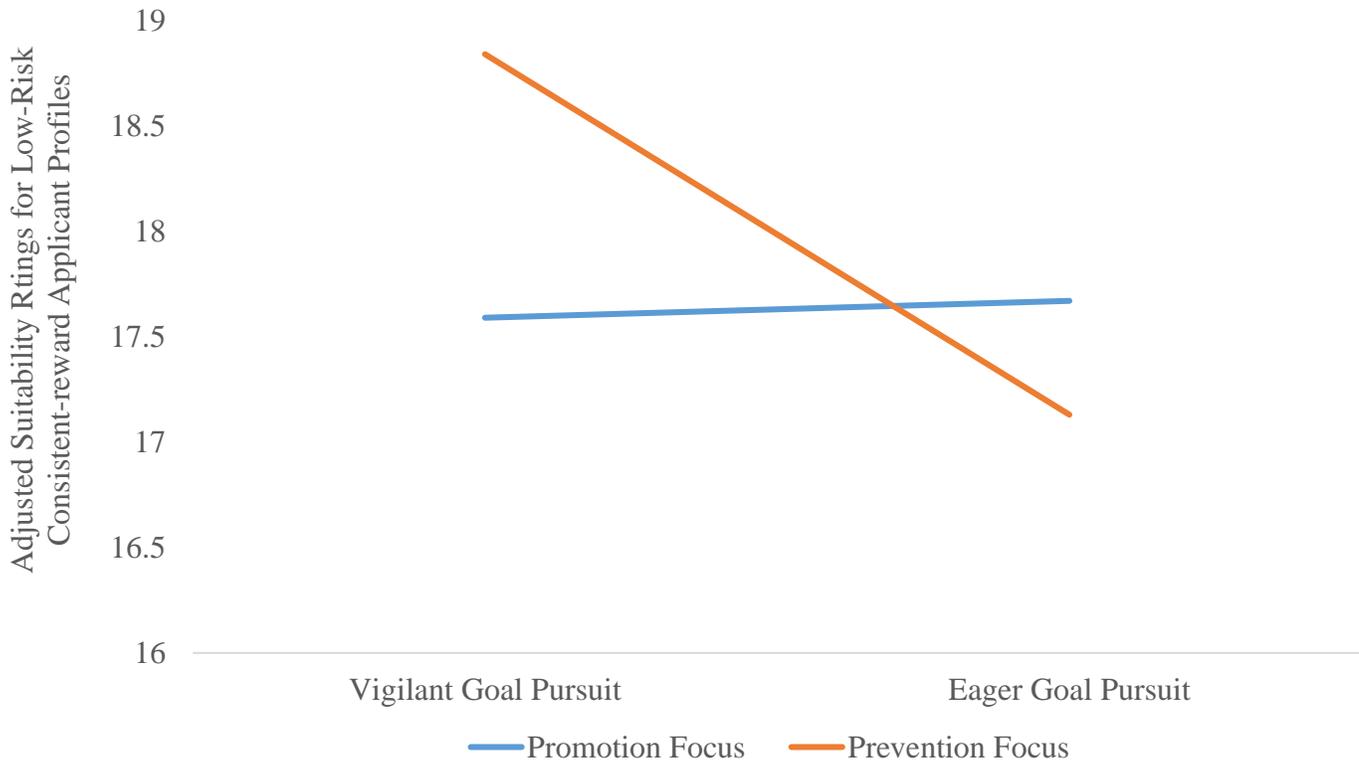
Figure 2. The interaction of regulatory focus and goal pursuit for exploratory adjusted applicant suitability ratings of low-risk consistent-reward applicant profiles.
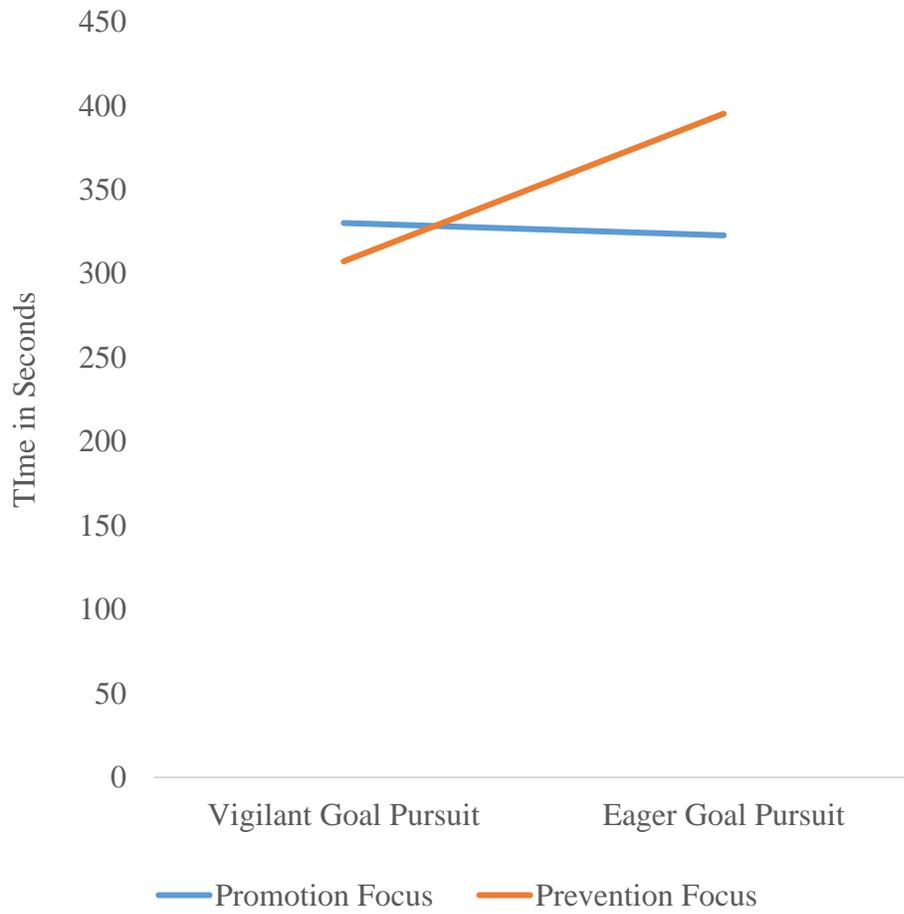
Figure 3. The interaction of regulatory focus and goal pursuit on time in seconds to rate the suitability of all applicant profiles.

Appendix A: Applicant profiles

Elevated probability of success: Applicants 1, 3, 5, 15, 16, and 17

Elevated probability of failure: Applicants 2, 4, 18, 19, 20, and 21

High-risk/variable reward: Applicants 7, 9, 11, 14, 22, and 24

Low-risk/ consistent reward: Applicants 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 23

Applicant 01

- **Age**: 35
- **Education**: Masters in Criminology
- **Related Experience**: 5 years
- **Physical exam score**: 88th percentile
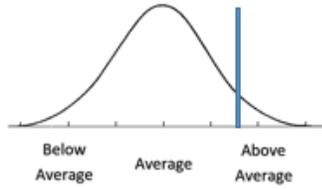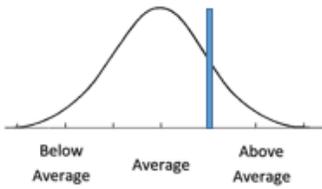
Below Average — Average — Above Average

- **Cognitive test**: 80th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 55th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Agreeableness: 50th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Conscientiousness: 80th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
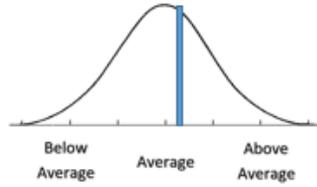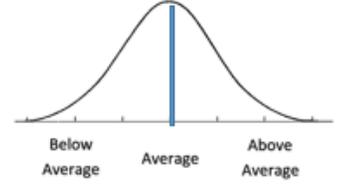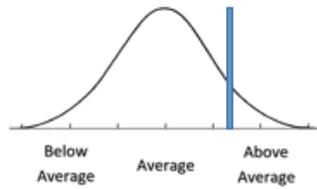
Emotional Stability: 85th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
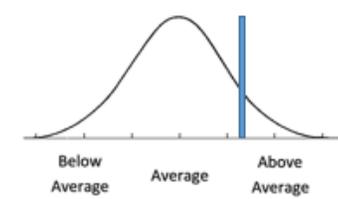
Applicant 02

- **Age:** 21
- **Education:** High school degree
- **Related Experience:** none
- **Physical exam score:** 40th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
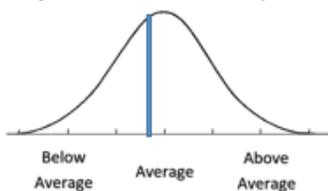
- **Cognitive test:** 44th percentile
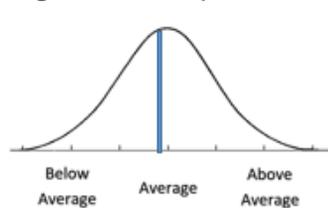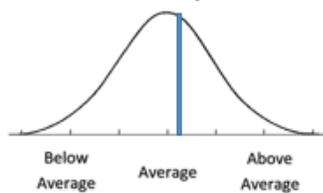
Below Average | Average | Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 55th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Agreeableness: 60th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Conscientiousness: 30th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
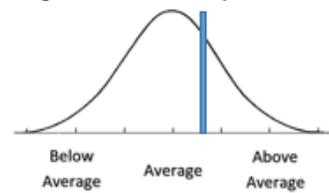
Emotional Stability: 47th percentile
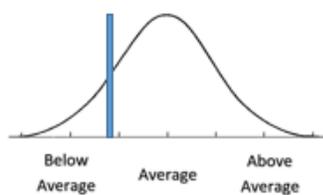
Below Average | Average | Above Average
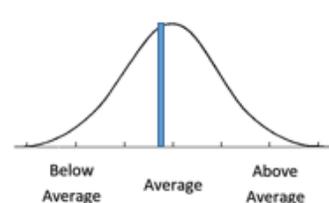
Applicant 03

- **Age**: 26
- **Education**: masters in human behavior
- **Related Experience**: 2 years
- **Physical exam score**: 70th percentile
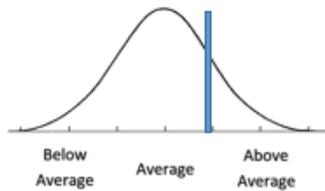
Below Average | Average | Above Average

- **Cognitive test**: 80th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 45th percentile
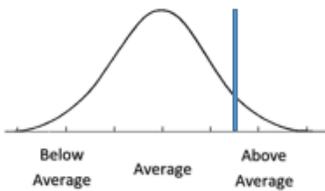
Below Average | Average | Above Average
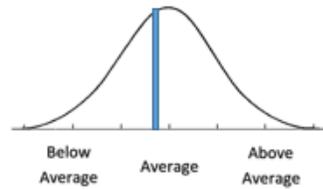
Agreeableness: 75th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Conscientiousness: 70th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Emotional Stability: 80th percentile
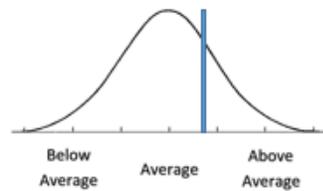
Below Average | Average | Above Average
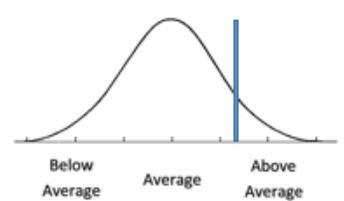
Applicant 04

- **Age:** 45
- **Education:** BS in Psychology
- **Related Experience:** none
- **Physical exam score:** 40th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
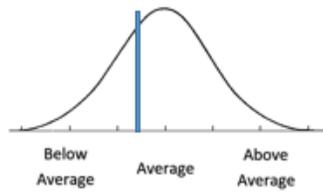
- **Cognitive test:** 47th percentile
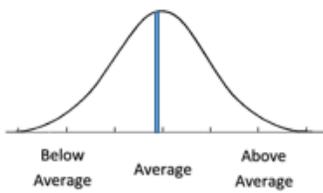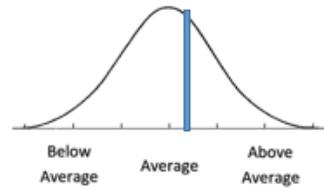
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 50th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 50th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
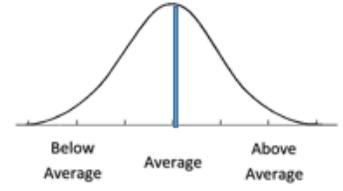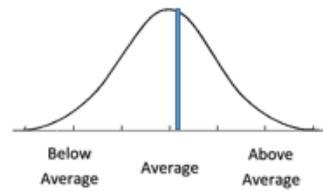
Emotional Stability: 52nd percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
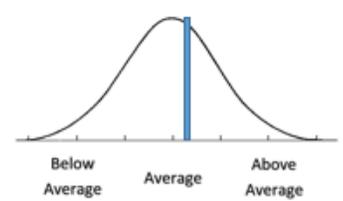
Applicant 05

- **Age**: 39
- **Education**: Masters in Criminology and Psychology
- **Related Experience**: 7
- **Physical exam score**: 70th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
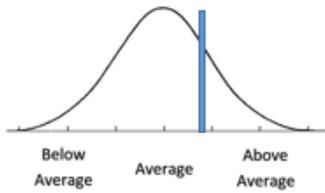
- **Cognitive test**: 83rd percentile
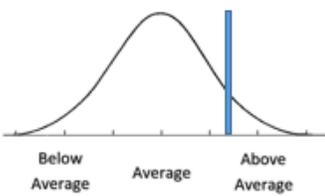
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 65th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
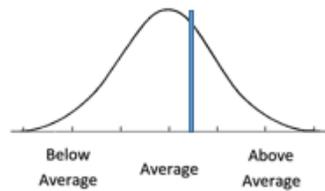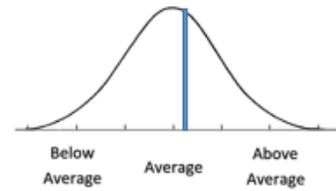
Conscientiousness: 77th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Emotional Stability: 70th percentile
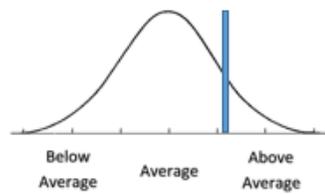
Below Average   Average   Above Average
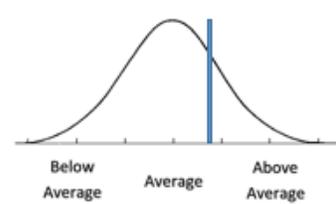
Applicant 06

- **Age**: 25
- **Education**: BS in Criminology
- **Related Experience**: 2 years
- **Physical exam score**: 60th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
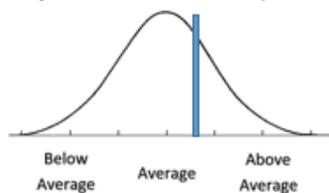
- **Cognitive test**: 52th percentile
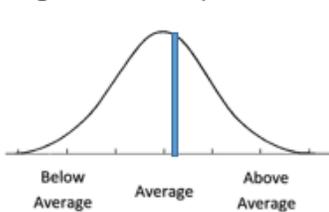
Below Average — Average — Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 50th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
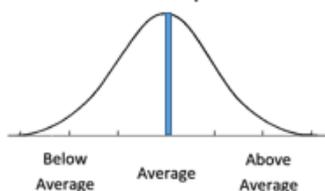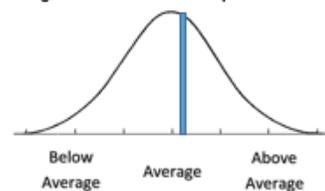
Conscientiousness: 68th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Emotional Stability: 50th percentile
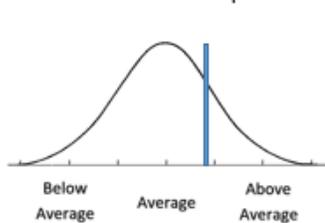
Below Average — Average — Above Average
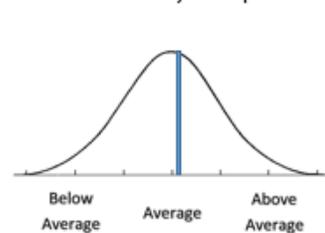
Applicant 07

- **Age**: 30
- **Education**: Masters in criminology and forensic psychology
- **Related Experience**: 2 years
- **Physical exam score**: 20th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
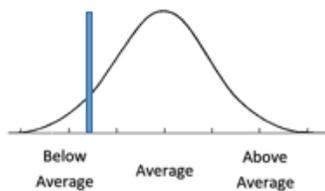
- **Cognitive test**: 95th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 50th percentile
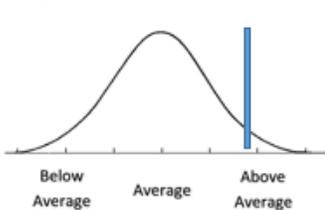
Below Average — Average — Above Average
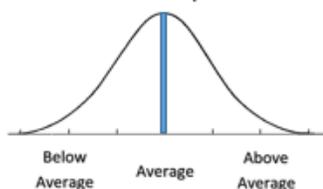
Agreeableness: 36th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
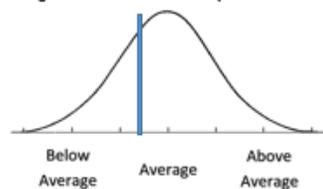
Conscientiousness: 85th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Emotional Stability: 50th percentile
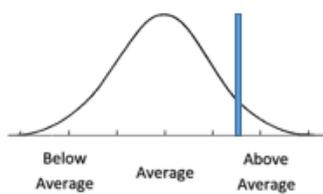
Below Average — Average — Above Average
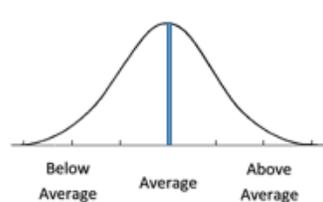
Applicant 08

- **Age**: 40
- **Education**: BS in psychology
- **Related Experience**: 5 years
- **Physical exam score**: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
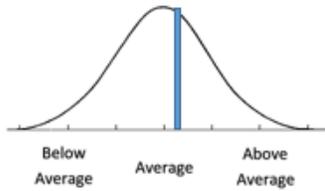
- **Cognitive test**: 49th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 60th percentile
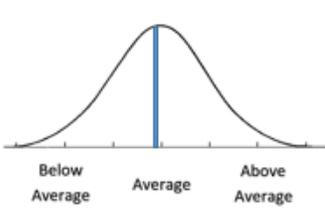
Below Average   Average   Above Average
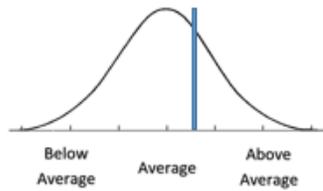
Agreeableness: 59th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 40th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
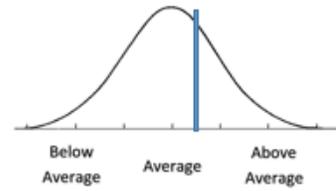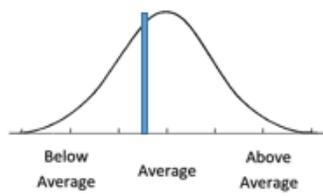
Emotional Stability: 65th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
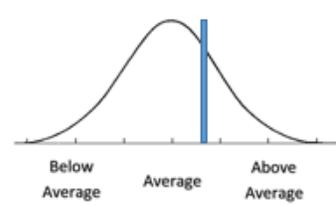
Applicant 09

- **Age**: 40
- **Education**: high school diploma
- **Related Experience**: 5 years
- **Physical exam score**: 93rd percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
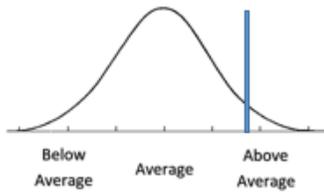
- **Cognitive test**: 25th percentile
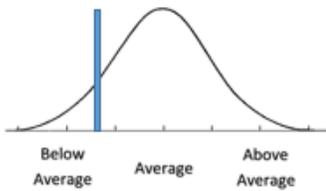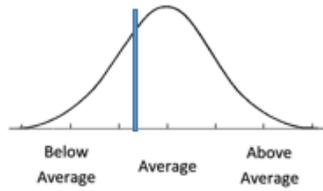
Below Average — Average — Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 30th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Agreeableness: 50th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Conscientiousness: 80th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
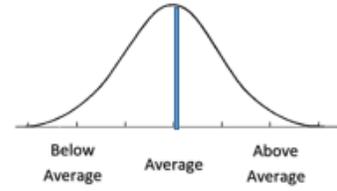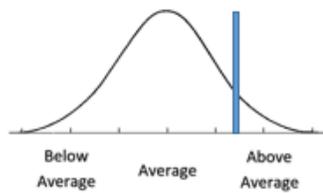
Emotional Stability: 55th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
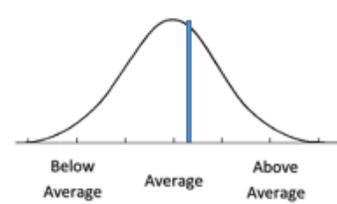
Applicant 10

- **Age:** 24
- **Education:** BA in History
- **Related Experience:** 1 year
- **Physical exam score:** 60th percentile
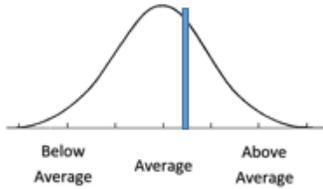
Below Average | Average | Above Average

- **Cognitive test:** 45th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 70th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Agreeableness: 60th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Conscientiousness: 40th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
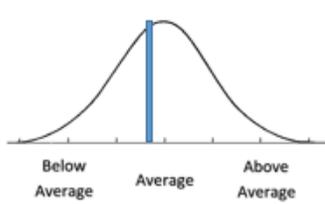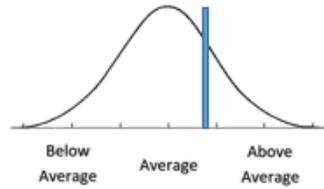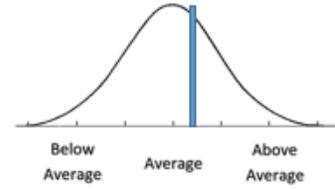
Emotional Stability: 50th percentile
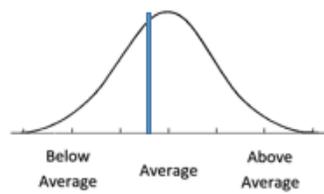

Below Average | Average | Above Average
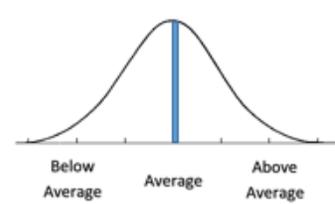
Applicant 11

- **Age**: 27
- **Education**: High school diploma
- **Related Experience**: 5 years
- **Physical exam score**: 90th percentile

Below Average / Average / Above Average
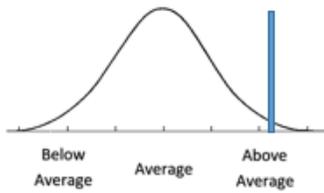
- **Cognitive test**: 30th percentile

Below Average / Average / Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 70th percentile
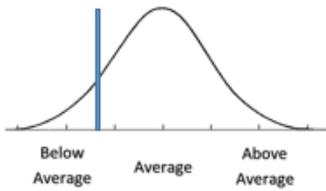
Below Average / Average / Above Average
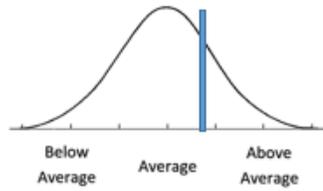
Agreeableness: 85th percentile
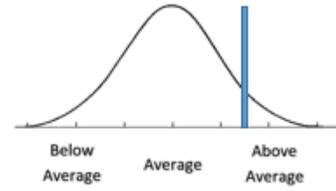
Below Average / Average / Above Average

Conscientiousness: 80th percentile

Below Average / Average / Above Average

Emotional Stability: 80th percentile
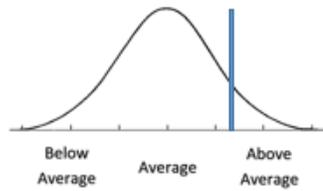
Below Average / Average / Above Average
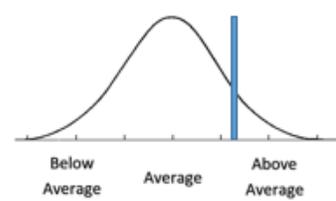
Applicant 12

- **Age**: 36
- **Education**: BA in Psychology
- **Related Experience**: 4 years
- **Physical exam score**: 60th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
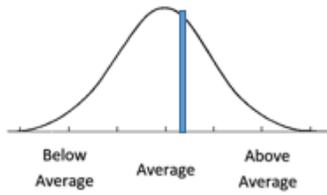
- **Cognitive test**: 50th percentile
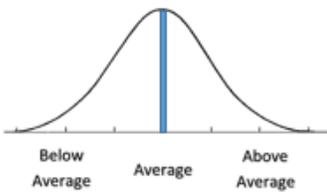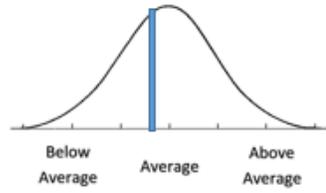
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 45th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 45th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
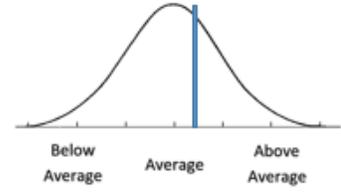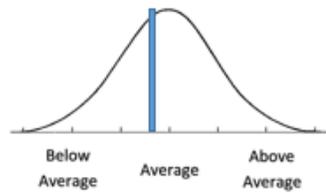
Emotional Stability: 60th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
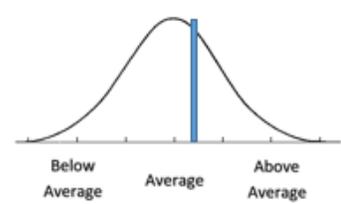
Applicant 13

- **Age**: 21
- **Education**: BS in Biology
- **Related Experience**: 1 year
- **Physical exam score**: 60th percentile
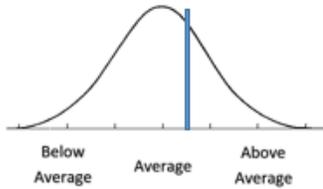
Below Average   Average   Above Average

- **Cognitive test**: 45th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 65th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 50th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
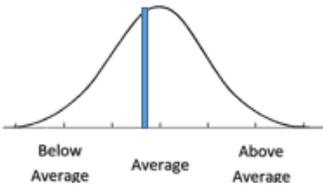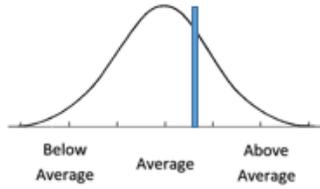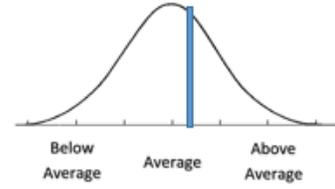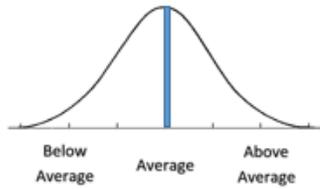
Emotional Stability: 58th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
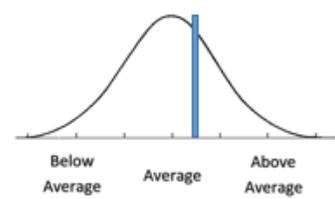
Applicant 14

- **Age:** 22
- **Education:** BS in psychology and masters in Criminology
- **Related Experience:** none
- **Physical exam score:** 10th percentile
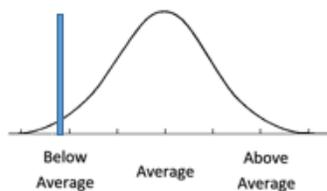

- **Cognitive test:** 94th percentile
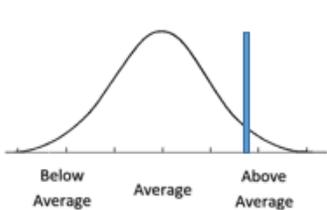

Personality

*Extraversion:* 30th percentile
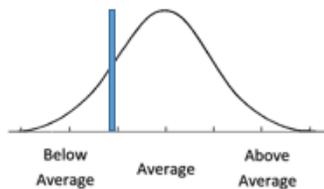
Agreeableness: 70th percentile
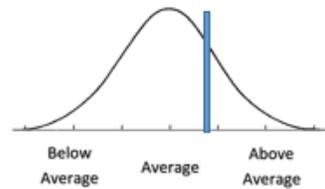

Conscientiousness: 90th percentile
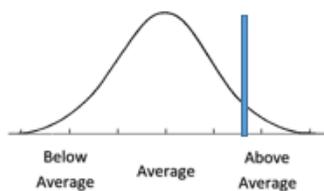

Emotional Stability: 95th percentile
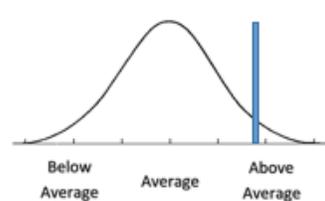
Applicant 15

- **Age**: 23
- **Education**: BA in Communications
- **Related Experience**: none
- **Physical exam score**: 87th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
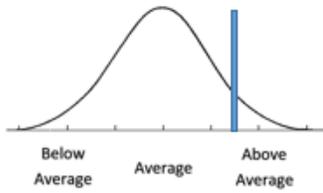
- **Cognitive test**: 82nd percentile
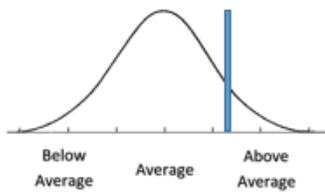
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 60th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
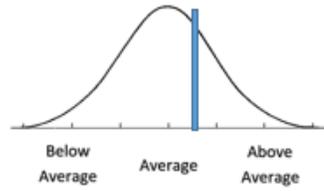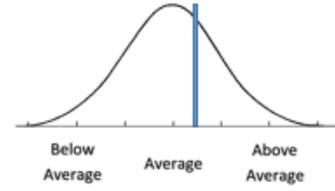
Conscientiousness: 65th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
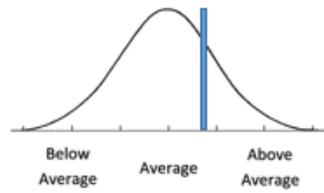
Emotional Stability: 87th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
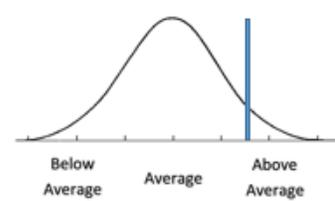
Applicant 16

- **Age**: 25
- **Education**: BS in Chemistry
- **Related Experience**: 6 months
- **Physical exam score**: 87th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
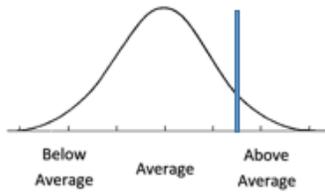
- **Cognitive test**: 85th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 54th percentile
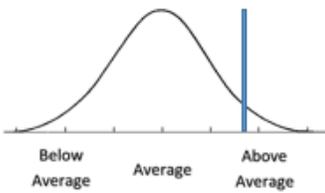
Below Average   Average   Above Average
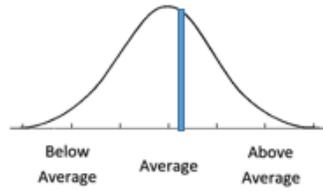
Agreeableness: 65th percentile
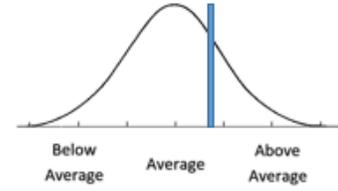
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 80th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Emotional Stability: 70th percentile
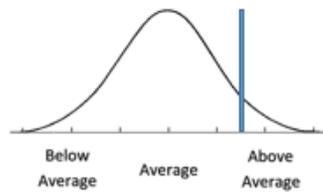
Below Average   Average   Above Average
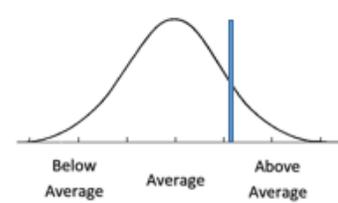
Applicant 17

- **Age**: 40
- **Education**: BS in Statistics
- **Related Experience**: 10 years
- **Physical exam score**: 70th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
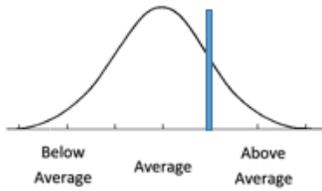
- **Cognitive test**: 78th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
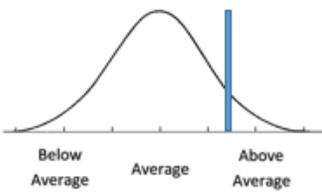
Personality

Extraversion: 52nd percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
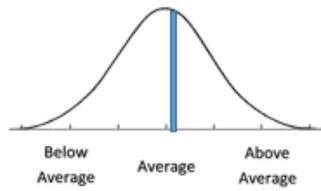
Agreeableness: 67th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
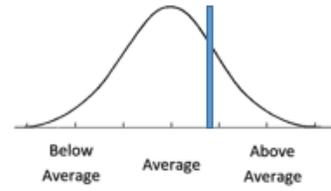
Conscientiousness: 60th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Emotional Stability: 80th percentile
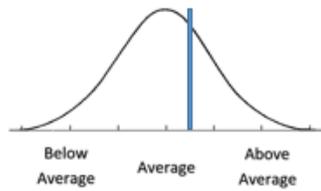
Below Average   Average   Above Average
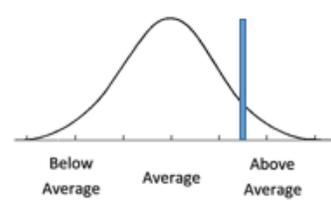
Applicant 18

- **Age**: 30
- **Education**: High School Diploma
- **Related Experience**: 1 year
- **Physical exam score**: 65th percentile

Below Average · Average · Above Average
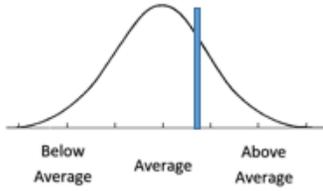
- **Cognitive test**: 39th percentile

Below Average · Average · Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 50th percentile
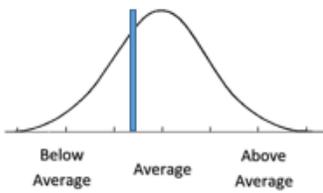
Below Average · Average · Above Average
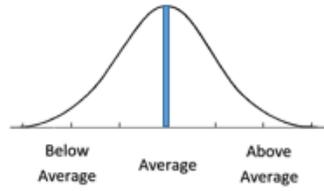
Agreeableness: 29th percentile

Below Average · Average · Above Average
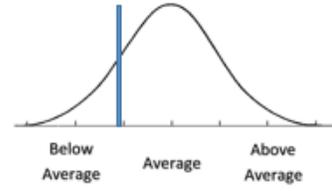
Conscientiousness: 43rd percentile

Below Average · Average · Above Average
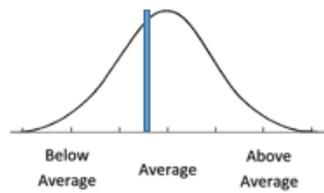
Emotional Stability: 49th percentile

Below Average · Average · Above Average
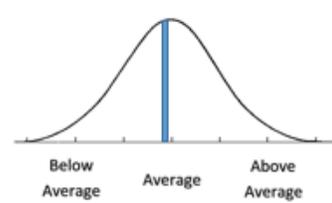
Applicant 19

- **Age:** 24
- **Education:** high school diploma
- **Related Experience:** 3 years
- **Physical exam score:** 30th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
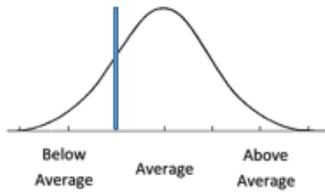
- **Cognitive test:** 41th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 50th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
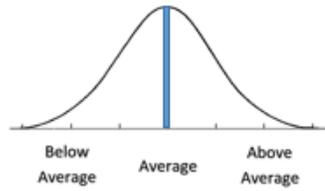
Agreeableness: 53rd percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
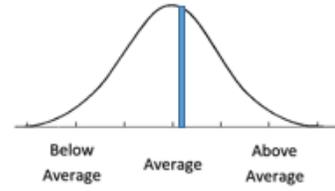
Conscientiousness: 54th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
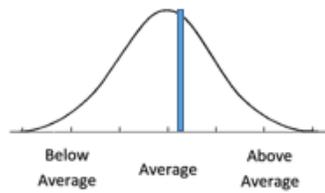
Emotional Stability: 56th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
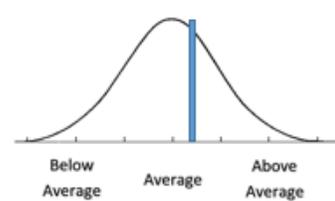
Applicant 20

- **Age**: 45
- **Education**: Masters in Biology
- **Related Experience**: none
- **Physical exam score**: 35th percentile
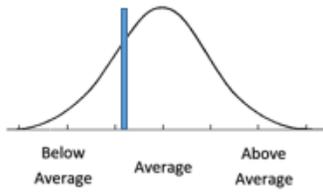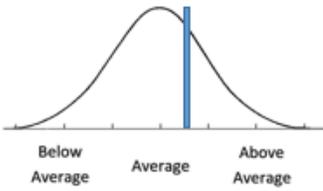
Below Average | Average | Above Average

- **Cognitive test**: 60th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 30th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average

Agreeableness: 55th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
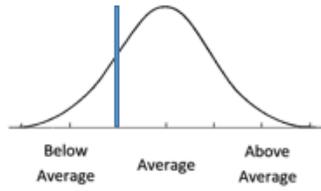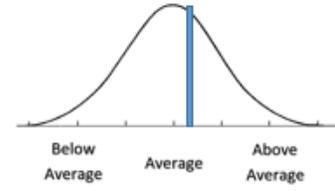
Conscientiousness: 55th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
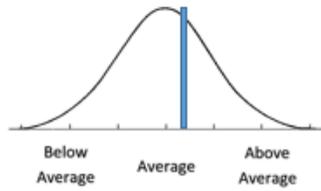
Emotional Stability: 30th percentile

Below Average | Average | Above Average
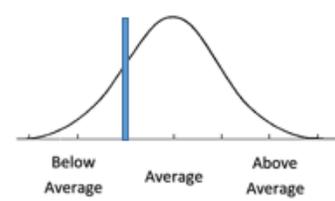
Applicant 21

- **Age**: 27
- **Education**: BS in Psychology
- **Related Experience**: none
- **Physical exam score**: 40th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

- **Cognitive test**: 60th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
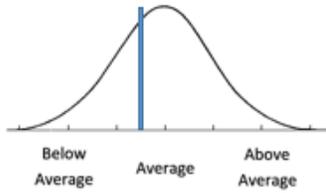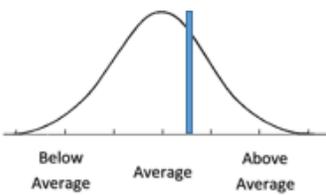
Personality

Extraversion: 25th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Agreeableness: 50th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average
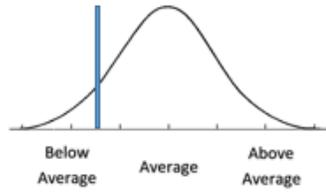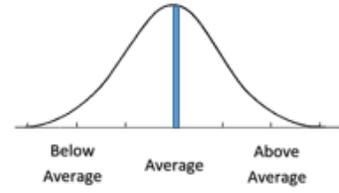
Conscientiousness: 57th percentile

Below Average — Average — Above Average

Emotional Stability: 45th percentile
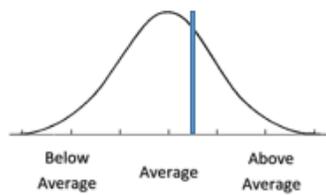
Below Average — Average — Above Average
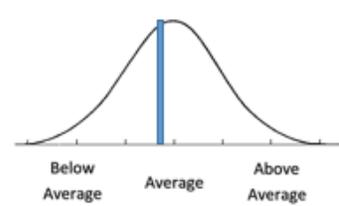
Applicant 22

- **Age**: 29
- **Education**: BS in Psychology
- **Related Experience**: 7 years
- **Physical exam score**: 40th percentile
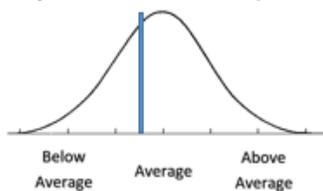

- **Cognitive test**: 93rd percentile
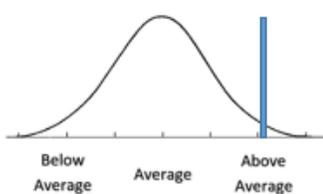

Personality

Extraversion: 51st percentile
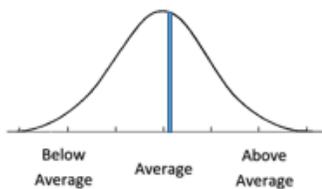
Agreeableness: 39th percentile
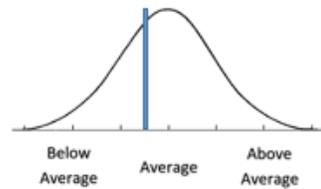
Conscientiousness: 50th percentile
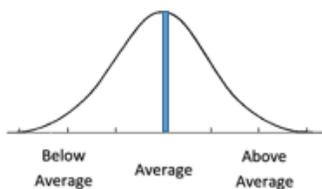
Emotional Stability: 45th percentile
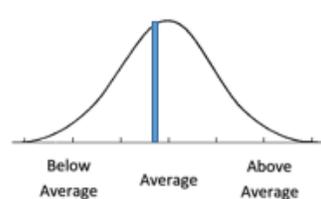
Applicant 23

- **Age**: 38
- **Education**: BS in Chemistry
- **Related Experience**: 4 years
- **Physical exam score**: 49th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
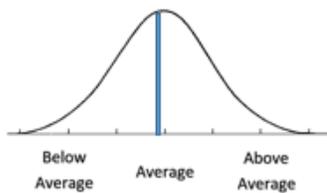
- **Cognitive test**: 63rd percentile
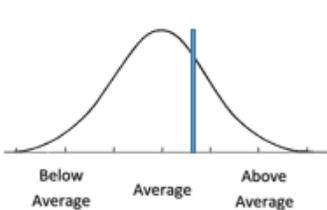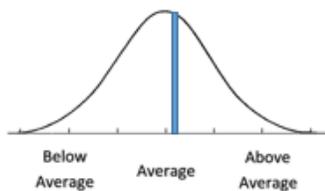
Below Average   Average   Above Average

Personality

Extraversion: 54th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Agreeableness: 60th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average

Conscientiousness: 45th percentile

Below Average   Average   Above Average
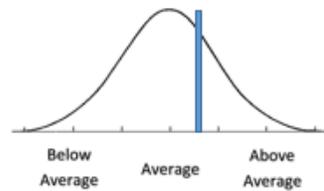
Emotional Stability: 47th percentile
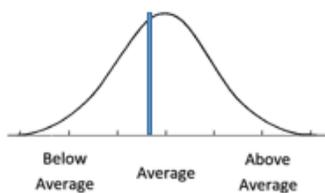
Below Average   Average   Above Average
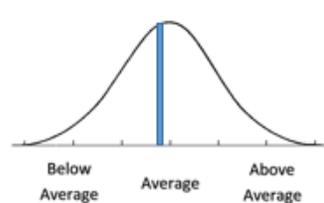
Applicant 24

- **Age:** 50
- **Education:** High School
- **Related Experience:** None
- **Physical exam score:** 80th percentile
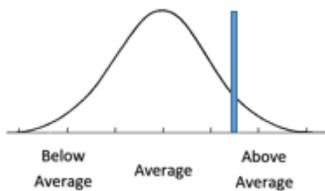
- **Cognitive test:** 90th percentile
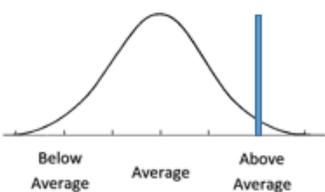
Personality

Extraversion: 59th percentile
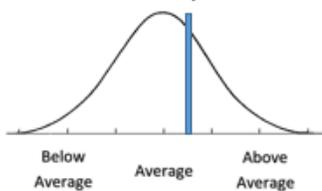
Agreeableness: 38th percentile

Conscientiousness: 30th percentile

Emotional Stability: 47th percentile