THE EFFECT OF STRESSORS ON THE SELF-EFFICACY-TASK PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP

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Stressors in the work environment lead to strain on employees and limit organizational performance. In addition, self-efficacy has been supported in the past as an additional work variable having a relationship with organizational performance. This study suggested that work stressors may interact with self-efficacy to alter the self-efficacy—job performance relationship. The work stressors of role ambiguity and time pressure were both included as potential moderators. An in-basket exercise was manipulated in order to give participants varying levels of work stressors during the exercise, as well as varying levels of self-efficacy. Regression analyses identified a significant effect of self-efficacy on task performance, but found no interaction effects of the two work stressors on the self-efficacy—performance relationship. ANOVA found no main effect of role ambiguity or time pressure on in-basket task performance. The findings support past literature on the consistent self-efficacy—performance relationship. The lack of significant results for role ambiguity and time pressure as moderators is discussed within the context of the measurement methods used.
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In today’s workplace, various job stressors often impose limitations on human performance. Not only can the increasing high-demand performance environments benefit from a better understanding of stress at work, but so can relatively routine performance environments (Salas, Driskell, Hughes, 1996). Stressors lead to strain among employees and limit organizational performance. A long-running goal of industrial psychology has been to identify job stressors and the situations in which they affect employees, and more specifically employee performance. Thus, there is pressure to understand the effects of job stressors on performance. The collection of literature in this area is varied in its approach to stressors and performance, and the findings regarding the effects of stressors on performance are often contradictory (Bowers, Weaver, Morgan, 1996). The purpose of this study is to experimentally investigate the effects of stressors on performance in the context of one particular relationship: the self efficacy-performance relationship. This study will add to the existing body of research on stress and performance in multiple ways: (a) including both self-report and objective methods of performance measurement, (b) implementing a laboratory study on stress that possesses experimental realism, (c) examining how self-efficacy is related to the stressor-performance relationship, and (d) manipulating levels of moderators of the self efficacy-performance relationship in an experimental setting.

Past research on stress and job performance

High levels of stress in the workplace have been linked to organizational performance outcomes such as increased health care costs, absenteeism and turnover, decreased safety behavior, and reduced productivity (Jex, 2002). In the study of job performance, an employee’s belief about his or her ability to perform job tasks is relevant to both employee self-esteem and organizational performance outcomes. Yet, the work environment is complex and many external
factors are present, meaning that the relationship between beliefs about one’s ability to perform a task and actual task performance is most likely moderated by various organizational and environmental factors. Relatively little attention has been paid to how the characteristics of a job, or job stressors, may influence variables such as self-efficacy (SE) that are typically considered stable individual characteristics (Parker, Turner, & Griffin, 2003). Although there is a great deal of research on how self beliefs affect performance, little research exists on how and when the relationship between self beliefs and performance is altered (Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995).

Self-efficacy, a person’s belief in his or her capability to perform a particular task, is a variable that is critical in determining performance on a task, and thus crucial to the understanding of job performance (Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). Intervening processes, such as the interaction between self beliefs and stressors, have been largely ignored in the study of work stress (Jex & Gudanowski, 1992). Research has begun to explore how SE moderates the stressor-performance relationship, but few studies have examined the effect of stressors on the SE-performance relationship (e.g., Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). Self-efficacy affects how well employees manage the requirements and challenges of their occupational pursuits (Bandura, 1997). In order to understand how SE is involved in the context of work stress and performance, the potential role of SE in the stress process should be examined experimentally in order to see how SE is associated with performance in the presence of stressors (e.g., Jex & Gudanowski, 1992).

Self-efficacy is one of the self beliefs that has frequently been studied in relation to job performance. The relationship between SE and job performance is an important one, given that significant relationships have been consistently identified between SE and many job performance dimensions (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Understanding which factors at work may moderate the effect of SE on performance is
important, given the organizational and financial consequences of job performance. Past research has focused on moderators of the stressor-performance relationship, neglecting to consider moderators of the SE-performance relationship. This new line of research comes from the hypothesis that job performance is not only influenced by individual characteristics such as SE, but also by the interaction of these stable characteristics with the work environment. Studying the interactions between individual characteristics and workplace stressors could provide a more realistic view of performance, and may be able to provide an explanation for the inconsistent findings in the stress-performance literature (Evans, Allen, Tafalla, & O’Meara, 1996). The intent of the current study is to determine if job stressors have an impact on the relationship between SE and task performance. In other words, do job stressors alter the beneficial impact of SE on task performance? The results of this study could provide insight into how to best improve employee performance using what is discovered about both SE and job stressors.

Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is derived from social cognitive theory, a theory which states that behavior, cognitions, and the environment all influence one another in a dynamic fashion (Bandura, 1997). Specific SE, as opposed to general SE, is the belief in one’s ability to successfully complete a specific task (Wood & Locke, 1987). Thus, one’s level of SE depends on behavior, cognitions, and the environmental factors present when completing that task. Past research indicates that SE is a good predictor of task performance (Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). The current study extends this line of research by suggesting that this SE-task performance relationship will be influenced by task stressors (time pressure and role ambiguity). So, the presence of stressors will have a moderating effect on the SE-task performance
relationship. In general, high levels of stressors are expected to decrease the SE-task performance relationship.

In an occupational setting, SE plays a role in how well employees perform their jobs (Bandura, 1997). McEnrue (1984) found that role ambiguity affected supervisor-rated performance of managers of both high and low levels of SE regarding their jobs. However, the exact role of SE in the stress-performance relationship is unclear. Studies suggest that without role ambiguity, competent employees will perform better than the less competent employees (Bandura, 1997; McEnrue, 1984). Competent employees will put their personal capabilities to optimal use when they know what they need to do, but not if their role is ambiguous. Evidence suggests that employees with both high and low levels of SE perform similarly when their roles are high in ambiguity, but when roles are not ambiguous the employees with higher SE perform better than the employees with lower SE (Bandura, 1997). High performers tend to be more affected by the distraction and stress of overload than are lower performers (Britt, 2003; Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005; Jex & Adams, in press). The finding that high-performing employees may falter under the pressure of certain job stressors is an important one. If an employee is identified as a high performer, this means that expectations exist about the average level of performance of that employee. The fact that stressful aspects of a job may decrease performance of high-performing employees is important to understand for employee selection considerations, as well as when designing jobs to maximize the output of the high-performing employees. High levels of stressors reduce the beneficial impact of SE on performance outcomes.

Recent findings already indicate that there is a moderating effect of stressors on the SE-task performance relationship (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). This finding regarding the moderating effect of stressors on the SE-task performance relationship is important for
organizational productivity. Different approaches may be needed to increase employee productivity depending on the individual employee’s level of SE and the level of stressors that accompany a specific job task (Bandura, 1997). Employees with high SE may only need a reduction in role ambiguity to perform well, while employees with low SE may need both a reduction in role ambiguity and an intervention to increase mastery experiences that will increase their SE in order to perform well (Bandura, 1997).

Research has examined the performance of employees of varying levels of SE when they are faced with stressors; the focus has been on whether varying levels of SE affect performance in the presence of stressors. Yet, the literature has just begun to examine how the stressors impact the SE-task performance relationship. One question that remains unanswered is whether the level of a stressor is important in determining the effect of SE on task performance. If a high level of a stressor is encountered, this may affect the SE-task performance relationship differently than if a low level of that same stressor is encountered (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). Given that the current literature on stress and performance provides little or no evidence as to whether the level of a task stressor affects task performance, the current study will attempt to answer this question. This knowledge will allow us to better understand the SE-task performance relationship, and to understand when job stressors may lessen the beneficial impact that SE has on task performance, with the hope of understanding if the strength of a job stressor alters the effect of SE on task performance or if the effect is merely all-or-nothing. The present study will examine whether SE affects task performance in a laboratory setting, if job stressors (time pressure and/or role ambiguity) moderate the SE-task performance relationship, and if stressors act as a moderator of the SE-task performance relationship.
Self efficacy-performance relationship

Self-efficacy is a construct that has been frequently linked to performance. Self-efficacy has a positive relationship with multiple types of performance (Bandura, 1997). The exact mechanism by which SE affects task performance depends on the situation (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984; Locke & Latham, 1990; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Wood & Bandura, 1989). In this study, self-efficacy is not treated a global personality trait which is stable across all situations, but rather a state that varies depending on the situation (Bandura, 1989; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). Self-efficacy may affect performance through various pathways (Bandura, 1997). One possible way is that self-efficacy may affect performance through altering task motivation. Individuals with high SE may be more motivated to gain mastery over the task at hand, whereas individuals with low SE may be motivated to increase their esteem and not to perform well on the task. An individual with high SE may set higher goals for him- or herself and anticipate optimistic situations, possibly leading to higher performance (Gupta & Sinha, 2002). A second mechanism by which SE may affect performance is resource depletion. When a person possesses low self-esteem or feels self-conscious about his or her performance on a task, that person’s attention may be diverted to raising self-esteem or lowering self-consciousness and away from task performance (Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989). This displacement of resources may be one of the mechanisms by which SE affects task performance, and may be why individuals with low SE have lower task performance. As SE has been determined to be a good predictor of performance, it is crucial to the prediction of performance to understand if environmental variables such job stressors influence this SE-task performance relationship.

Research suggests that SE has a direct, positive relationship with performance (Barling & Beattie, 1983; Taylor, Locke, Lee, & Gist, 1984). Individuals who have high SE tend to perform
better than individuals who have low SE (Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989). One study by Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen (1989) found that higher SE led to better performance on a training task. Participants were exposed to a 3-hour training session in which they learned how to use a specific financial software program. They found that the participants who had high SE prior to the training session received higher performance scores after the training was completed. Higher SE also leads to better performance on tasks such as generating creative solutions (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984). In the Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko (1984) study, participants were asked to think of as many uses for a household object as possible. They found that participants with high SE were able to generate more solutions than participants with low SE. Some of the processes underlying the findings from both of these studies may be related to the fact that SE influences motivation to complete a task successfully, goal-setting throughout the task, and also self-confidence during completion of the task. It is expected that this study will replicate past findings in that self-efficacy will have a positive relationship with task performance in this study.

_Hypothesis 1:_ Self-efficacy will have a positive relationship with task performance.

The predictive power of SE beliefs depends on the degree of correspondence between the capabilities being assessed by the SE and performance domain (Bandura, 1997). If the capabilities being measured are highly related and specific to the task being performed, then SE will be a better predictor of performance than if general SE is used to predict performance on a task. This study will measure task-specific SE in order to increase the predictive power of SE for task performance. One of the purposes of the current study is to examine the SE-performance relationship in a controlled environment, rather than a field experiment. By examining this relationship in the laboratory, it is hoped that the inference that the specific SE of a task will lead
to better performance on that task, and that stressors cause the SE-task performance relationship to change, can be better assessed. The present study attempts to explain the SE-task performance relationship by proposing that stressors moderate the SE-task performance relationship on the task level as opposed to the general level. Self-efficacy is predicted to relate to performance on the specific task at hand, not all tasks in general.

Past SE research has examined SE as a moderator of the stressor-performance relationship (Jex & Bliese, 1999). This interaction is an important one, and building on this research by looking at the effect of stressors on the SE-performance relationship can provide more understanding about when SE is an effective means of improving job performance. Individual resources such as SE contribute to high performance on the job; however, work environments are frequently complex and variables such as stressors are expected to interfere with how SE influences performance under various levels of stress (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). It is important for organizations to understand how factors that may be present in the environment may interrupt or disrupt effective SE and work performance (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005).

**Stressor-performance relationship**

The nature of the relationship between job stressors and performance is not completely understood, yet the relationship has many implications for organizations. If stressors decrease performance, it is important to know how and when, as well as to determine which variables can help buffer the effect of stressors on performance (Fay & Sonnentag, 2002). As there are many potential stressors in the work environment, research has only begun to tackle the stressor-performance relationship in a laboratory setting. According to recent meta-analytic results, accounting for the inconsistencies in the research on stress and performance at work is critical.
not only for theoretical reasons, but for practical reasons as well (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). If we create studies assuming the stress-performance relationship as linear, non-linear relationships will be missed. It is important to not only study the stressor-performance relationship, but also to look at individual characteristics that help or hinder the stress process. Self-efficacy is one such variable, capable of increasing or decreasing task performance. Thus, examining how SE affects performance under different conditions would benefit not only the SE literature, but the stress-performance literature as well.

Job stressors are objects or situations in the work environment that lead to distress and cause an employee to experience strain (e.g., anxiety, frustration, health effects, job dissatisfaction; Evans, Allen, Tafalla, & O’Meara, 1996; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Jex & Gudanowski, 1992). Stressors can also influence performance on the job (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005; Jex, 1998). For this reason it is important to understand the various stressors and the effects they have on both employee strain and employee performance. In this study, the job stressors that are hypothesized to affect performance are time pressure and role ambiguity. These are both stressors that occur frequently in organizational settings and can be manipulated in the laboratory. Both time pressure and role ambiguity have relationships with performance by negatively influencing working conditions (Bhuian, Menguc, & Borsboom, 2005).

There are distinct theories about the relationship between stressors and performance. In general, the presence of stressors leads to decreased job performance (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005). However, other findings suggest that the relationship between stressors and performance is curvilinear; low and high levels of a stressor lead to decreased performance, but a moderate level of a stressor actually leads to increased performance (Jex, 1998). Most research on the stressor-performance relationship, however, has been based on the
assumption that the form of the relationship between stressors and performance is linear (Jex, 1998). Other studies have hypothesized a quadratic relationship between stressors and performance and found support as well (Bhuian, Menguc, & Borsboom, 2005). The fact that both the linear model and the quadratic model have received moderate support suggests that both models can be used to explain the stressor-performance relationship (Abramis, 1994A; Evans, Allen, Tafalla, & O’Meara, 1996; Jex, 1998). As the intensity of the stressor increases, performance is initially high followed by a decline with a moderate intensity of stressor and increased again with extremely high levels of stressors (Jex, 1998). The present study expects support for a linear effect of stressors on performance; the design only examines high and low levels of stressors, not a moderate level, and therefore does not hope to examine non-linear effects. In this study, task performance is expected to have a linear relationship with the intensity of stressor that is encountered.

Stressors moderating the SE-performance relationship

An emerging area of study in the SE literature seeks to examine not only how SE affects different types of performance, but how the SE-performance relationship can be influenced by intervening factors (such as moderators) that alter the SE-performance relationship. A few studies have already suggested that the direct relationship between SE and performance can be influenced by moderating variables such as stressors and personality characteristics (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005; Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Jimmieson, 2000; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998; Weinberg, Yukelson, & Jackson, 1980; Wood & Locke, 1987).

The current study is similar to one of the few previous studies that have begun to examine the possible moderators of the SE-performance relationship (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). A study by Brown, Jones, and Leigh (2005) examined the moderating effect of role overload on the
SE-performance relationship in the work environment. Work performance is dependent on variables such as SE that give the employee the resources (e.g., challenging goals, motivation, etc.) needed to complete a task (Hobfoll, 1998). Factors in the environment, such as stressors and other negative variables, may interfere with the ability of SE to encourage high performance (Jex, 1998). Thus, Brown, Jones, and Leigh (2005) chose to examine how role overload moderated the relationship between SE and work performance. This study administered two questionnaires to sales representatives of an office supply organization over a two-month time period. Performance was measured as the percentage increase in objective sales dollars between the second and third years of employment. Results showed that role overload moderated the relationship between SE and performance in that self-efficacy was significantly related to performance when role overload was low, but not when role overload was high. So, the effect of SE on performance was higher when stressors were low, and lower when stressors were high (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005). It seems that the relationship between SE and task performance decreases in the presence of high levels of stressors. The findings of this study suggest that the SE-performance relationship is susceptible to the harmful effects of negative work variables such as role overload. In other words, the benefits of variables (SE) that typically lead to high performance are negated when employees must perform in the presence of stressors. This has significant implications for the workplace, given that low levels of role overload are most likely present in most workplace situations. Relatively little is known about the moderating and mediating variables of the SE-task performance relationship, and the current study can further this line of research started by Brown, et al. (2005).

Expectancy theory may be able to provide an explanation for why job stressors moderated the SE-task performance relationship in the Brown, et al. (2005) study. Using
Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory that performance is determined by motivation and ability, LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine (2005) suggested that expectancy theory can apply to the stress-performance literature. They hypothesize that stressors influence performance through motivation. Motivation on a task is determined by the direction, level, and persistence of effort toward work. Stressors may be associated with a decrease in motivation because the discrepancy between the level of effort needed to succeed on a task and the rewards gained from succeeding on that task increases as stressors increase. Applying this line of reasoning to the current study, time pressure and role ambiguity may have negative relationships with task performance because these two stressors decrease motivation to perform the task. Similarly, stressors may moderate the SE-task performance relationship by affecting motivation. High-performing employees may experience a decrease in performance when confronted with job stressors because they experience a change in motivation. When high-performing employees experience job stressors, the reward for completing a task is high because their performance is high. When job stressors are introduced, the discrepancy between effort necessary to complete the task and the reward gained from completing that task is decreased.

The effect of self-efficacy on performance has been well established in the literature; however, there is limited research on how SE reacts in the presence of other factors (e.g., job stressors) to determine performance (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984). Few studies besides Brown, et al. (2005) have examined stressors as a moderator of the SE-task performance relationship. Stressors are known to affect performance, but not much is known about how stressors influence the SE-performance relationship. Thus, the current study aims to understand more about how and when job stressors affect the SE-task performance relationship. In this study, the effects of two stressors will be studied in terms of their influence on the SE-
performance relationship. Given that role overload moderated the effect of SE on performance, the current study predicts similar stressors, time pressure and role ambiguity, will also moderate the SE-performance relationship (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005).

*Time pressure.* Research has identified time pressure as a stressor that affects decision making, stress, and performance (Klein, 1996; Thunholm, 2005). Time pressure refers to a task in which there does not appear to be enough time to complete the task requirements. Various studies have suggested that time pressure affects task performance (e.g., Adelman, Yeo, & Miller, 2006; Kobbeltvedt, Brun, & Laberg, 2005). This study will use time pressure as a job stressor of interest as it is a task characteristic that can be easily manipulated in a laboratory setting, and it has experimental realism, or is generalizable to the work environment. Time pressure generally leads to a state of anxiety. This leads to the hypothesis that a task with higher time pressure will lead to decreased task performance.

Adelman, Yeo, & Miller (2006) discovered an effect of time pressure on team performance, which was operationally defined as the performance of the leader of the team. With increasing time pressure came decreasing performance of the team’s leader. This inverse relationship may be explained by the change in process that is accompanied by an increase in time pressure, such as a change in the sharing of information among team members or a change in the cognitive control used to make decisions. Thus, time pressure is a moderator of interest in this study because it has consistently been shown to influence performance on a task with decision-making components. In addition, it is an easy stressor to manipulate consistently in a laboratory setting and is a variable that is present in the work environment. Time pressure is expected to modify the effect of SE on task performance, thereby offering explanation as to how SE affects performance. In this case, time pressure is hypothesized to have a main effect on task
performance. This negative relationship could be due to the anxiety and changed in motivation caused by situations with high time pressure.

**Hypothesis 2:** Time pressure will be negatively associated with task performance.

In addition to looking at the direct effect of time pressure on task performance, a moderating effect of time pressure on task performance is also expected. Previous research has indicated that high and low time pressure have different effects on performance (Adelman, Yeo, & Miller, 2006). Depending on the task itself as well as characteristics of the person completing the task, time pressure may have positive or negative consequences. In the current study, low time pressure may lead to superior performance from individuals with high SE, but high time pressure may lead to equal performance from both high and low SE individuals.

**Hypothesis 3:** Time pressure will moderate the relationship between SE and task performance. The relationship between SE and task performance will be higher when time pressure is low, compared to when time pressure is high.

**Role ambiguity.** Role ambiguity is a second stressor that is frequently encountered in the workplace. Role ambiguity refers to the perceived lack of the necessary information a salesperson requires to perform their role properly (Bhuian, Menguc, & Borsboom, 2005). Research shows that ambiguity of a role leads to poor performance on sales tasks and other applied performance outcomes (Bhuian, Menguc, & Borsboom, 2005). A meta-analysis of the relationship between role ambiguity and performance revealed a strong correlation between the two variables (Tubre, Sifferman, & Collins, 1996). Higher role ambiguity is related to lower performance. This negative relationship could be due to the amount of time allocated to determining one’s appropriate role and responsibilities, or to the modification of goals that results from frustration due to lack of clear roles.
Role ambiguity is a stressor of interest in this study because it is correlated with performance more strongly than other role stressors such as role overload and role conflict (Abramis, 1994A; Abramis, 1994B; Jex, 1998). Bhuian, Menguc, & Borsboom (2005) found a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance in an applied setting. More specifically, they examined the relationship between role ambiguity and the performance of salespeople. A negative, linear relationship was identified, suggesting that higher role ambiguity is related to lower job performance. Thus, role ambiguity is a stressor with applied consequences and is able to be manipulated in a laboratory setting. This study intends to replicate these findings by finding a negative relationship between role ambiguity and task performance.

Hypothesis 4: Role ambiguity will be negatively associated with task performance.

In addition to looking at the direct effect of role ambiguity on task performance, a moderating effect of role ambiguity on task performance is also expected. Role stressors (role ambiguity, role overload, role conflict) have been found to moderate the SE-performance relationship. Brown, Jones, & Leigh (2005) examined role overload as a moderator of the SE-performance relationship. The level of role overload that sales representatives experienced moderated the effect of SE on performance. Self-efficacy was significantly related to performance when role overload was low but not when role overload was high. As role overload and role ambiguity are both role stressors and have been found to have similar direct effects on performance, this same relationship is expected to apply when examining the effect of role ambiguity on the SE-performance relationship. When role ambiguity is low, the relationship between SE and performance will be high. Self-efficacy may have more of an impact on task performance when stressors are present at a low level because of motivational processes that may occur in the presence of low levels of stressors (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). When role
ambiguity is high the relationship between SE and performance is expected to be low. Self-efficacy may not have much of an effect on task performance when a high level of a stressor is present due to the decrease in perceived ability to complete the task with the given time period and resources.

**Hypothesis 5:** Role ambiguity will moderate the relationship between SE and task performance. The relationship between SE and task performance will be higher when role ambiguity is low, compared to when role ambiguity is high.

Although it is important and crucial to study why high SE may lead to better performance, it is beyond the scope of this study. This study seeks only to examine the situations in which job stressors moderate the SE-task performance relationship, with the hope that the results of this study will provide information about which job stressors affect the SE-task performance relationship, and under which conditions. Processes that interfere with the stress process, such as the interaction between stressors and self beliefs such as SE, have been largely ignored (Jex & Gudanowski, 1992). The results of this study may provide answers about the true benefit of SE in the workplace when faced with varying levels of job stressors. Research has shown that not all individuals are equally affected by stressors and that some individuals are better able to cope with demands in ways that reduce the negative impact of stress (Britt, Castro, & Adler, 2005; Bowers, Weaver, & Morgan, 1996). The experimental design of this study will allow for causal inferences, something researchers have been calling for in order to strengthen this body of research (Spector, Dwyer, & Jex, 1988). The combination of both self- and other-performance ratings is another benefit of this study.

The current study will add to the SE and stress-performance literature study in three major ways. First, this study is an extension of the Brown, et al. (2005) study. The study conducted by Brown, et al. (2005) was executed in an organizational setting and this study will
be conducted in a laboratory setting, allowing for more environmental control of study variables without extraneous organizational factors influencing the results. The second contribution is based on the fact that previous studies have focused on variables that *mediate* the SE-performance relationship. This study will be one of the few to examine the role of job stressors as a *moderator* of the SE-task performance relationship in an experimental setting. Third, both time pressure and role ambiguity will be examined at multiple levels (high and low) to see if the strength of a stressor also plays a role in affecting performance.
Participants

Data for this study were collected from one hundred ninety eight psychology undergraduates at a mid-sized university in the Midwest United States. Responses had been collected from 210 participants but 12 participants’ data were irretrievable from the online software program. Sixty one percent of the participants were female. The average age of participants was 20 years ($SD = 3.90$). Participants received course credit in their introductory psychology courses for participating. In addition, participants were informed that ten $20 gift certificates to Amazon.com would be awarded to randomly selected participants following completion of the project.

Design

There were eight total conditions in the study. Four conditions assessed the interaction between SE and time pressure, and four conditions were used to measure the interaction between SE and role ambiguity. Both 2x2 designs were considered separate from each other in the analyses. In the SE x Time Pressure design, each variable had both a high and a low level, leading to four combinations of stressors. Role ambiguity was not manipulated in the SE x Time Pressure design, so participants in these four conditions experienced low role ambiguity. In the SE x Role Ambiguity design, each variable had both a high and a low level, leading to four combinations of stressors. Time pressure was not manipulated in the SE x Role Ambiguity design, so participants in these four conditions experienced low time pressure.

Procedure

Data collection occurred in blocks of one hour. Each hour was set up to be either a high or low time pressure hour, so that participants in the low time pressure were not distracted by
participants in the high time pressure conditions (who were expected to finish the in-basket earlier in general).

After completing a consent form, participants were randomly assigned to a website that placed them into one of the eight possible conditions described in the design section. They worked on a computer for the entire experiment. Participants first completed a positive and negative affect scale. They then completed a two-memo sample in-basket exercise and received randomized false feedback about their performance on that sample in-basket exercise (SE manipulation). Participants were randomly assigned into the two SE feedback conditions. The false feedback was meant to affect their SE regarding the upcoming real in-basket exercise, and was either negative (low SE conditions) or positive (high SE conditions). The high SE group was given information that should have led them to feel high SE toward the upcoming real in-basket task (e.g., “Results indicate that you performed extremely well on the sample exercise”). The low SE group was given information that should have led them to feel low SE toward the upcoming real in-basket task (e.g., “Results indicate that you performed poorly on the sample exercise”). Following the false feedback, a self-report SE measure about the sample in-basket was administered.

Finally, participants took the real in-basket exercise. All participants completed an in-basket exercise. The in-basket tasks varied in the level of SE, and either time pressure and/or role ambiguity depending on condition. When the in-basket exercise had been completed, participants rated their own performance on the in-basket and completed a measure of SE that assessed how well they think they would perform on a future in-basket exercise. Finally, self-report manipulation checks were collected for role ambiguity, time pressure, and awareness of research hypotheses prior to the study. Participants were then debriefed and informed that the feedback on
the sample in-basket exercise was random and in no way related to their actual performance on the exercise. The study took 45-60 minutes to complete.

**Measures**

See Appendix A for complete versions of all measures used in the study. The specific instructions that were manipulated for each condition are also listed in Appendix A in the instructions sections where they were used.

**Self-efficacy.** Self-efficacy was manipulated directly following the sample in-basket exercise. Each participant randomly received one of two feedback statements after completing the sample in-basket that was meant to alter his or her SE toward the upcoming real in-basket exercise. Participants in the low SE conditions were told that they had performed poorly, while participants in the high SE conditions were told that they had performed extremely well on the sample in-basket. The SE manipulation was significant, with the high SE conditions ($M = 51.98$, $SD = 7.31$) admitting to having more SE about the upcoming in-basket exercise than the low SE conditions ($M = 47.63$, $SD = 7.41$; $t (1, 195) = -4.14, p < 0.05$).

Following the SE manipulation, self-report SE was collected using 13 items from the scale by Silver, Mitchell, & Gist (1995). This SE scale assessed how confident participants were in their ability to successfully complete the upcoming in-basket exercise. The scale was administered a second time after participants completed the in-basket exercise. It assessed how confident participants were that they could perform well on future in-basket exercises. Both versions of the SE scale are identical except for slight changes in tense. The Cronbach’s alpha of the measure given after the sample in-basket was 0.92 and the measure given after the real in-basket had a reliability of 0.81.
Self-efficacy was measured as task-specific SE, not general SE. The SE scale contained items that assessed specific SE regarding the in-basket exercise (e.g., “I am capable of completing this in-basket exercise successfully”). Each item asked participants both how capable and confident they were that they could complete each aspect of the exercise successfully, but only confidence ratings were used in the analyses (Gist, Schwoerer, & Rosen, 1989; Richard, Diefendorff, & Martin, 2006; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). The rating scale was a Likert-type scale assessing how well the participant felt he or she would perform on the upcoming task. Scores ranged from 1 (Not at all confident) to 5 (Very confident; Bandura, 1977).

**Time pressure.** The level of time pressure was manipulated by altering references to time pressure in the in-basket instructions. Participants in the high time pressure conditions were told to work as fast as possible in order to finish the exercise in the time given. Participants in the low time pressure conditions were instructed to take their time on the exercise.

The time pressure manipulation check was assessed with a five-item scale about how hard, fast, and rushed the participants felt (Spector, & Jex, 1998). The response scale was a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) scale. The time pressure manipulation was significant. Participants in the high time pressure conditions felt more time pressure ($M = 3.39, SD = 0.60$) than participants in the low time pressure conditions ($M = 3.02, SD = 0.64$; $t (1, 85) = -2.75, p < 0.05$). Cronbach’s alpha of the time pressure scale was 0.73.

**Role ambiguity.** Role ambiguity conditions were manipulated by giving either many or few instructions about how performance on the in-basket would be graded (e.g., the specific standards on which their performance would be graded). The high role ambiguity conditions did not receive information about how the in-basket would be scored. The low role ambiguity conditions received detailed information about both the performance grading criteria, including
the specific scoring criteria that coders would later use to rate their performance on the in-basket exercise.

To measure success of the role ambiguity manipulation, seven items from Breaugh and Colihan’s (1994) scale were adapted for an experimental setting. On a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), participants rated how ambiguous the instructions for the in-basket were. The role ambiguity manipulation was not significant ($t(1, 81) = -0.18, p > 0.05$). The high role ambiguity conditions ($M = 3.10, SD = 0.80$) did not rate feeling more role ambiguity than the low role ambiguity conditions ($M = 3.13, SD = 0.74$). The scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.90.

Task performance. Task performance was assessed with an in-basket exercise that was chosen to provide experimental realism (Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, & Butler, 1999; Richard & Jex, 1995). An in-basket task is a simulated work task designed to measure performance on work that managers typically do on a regular basis in an organizational setting (e.g., letters, memos, e-mails; Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, & Butler, 1999; Shippmann, Prien, & Katz, 1990). In-basket tasks have been successful in student populations and students have been indicated as a valid sample for generalizing results to entry-level employees (Richard & Jex, 1995; Shippmann, Prien, & Katz, 1990).

The in-basket exercise was taken from the Tarleton Assessment of Principals (TAP) assessment center materials (Tarleton Assessment of Principals, 2003). The in-basket task requires approximately 45 minutes to complete. The TAP in-basket was not modified from its original form, except for the manipulation of the instructions (role ambiguity and time pressure) for each condition. Each participant was presented with a standard set of problems in the form of letters, memos, reports, and related materials (Meyer, 1970). The TAP in-basket is used to assess different areas of performance desired in a future principal, such as problem analysis, delegation,
organizational oversight, instructional management, resource allocation, sensitivity, and written expression.

In-basket performance on the in-basket memos was rated according to pre-specified criteria (Cooper, Clasen, Silva-Jalonen, & Butler, 1999; Richard & Jex, 1995). The ten criteria used to rate each participant were taken from the original TAP scoring guide provided with the TAP manual and are listed in Appendix B. The ten scoring criteria were rated on a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) scale. Four trained psychology majors who were unfamiliar with the study and its hypotheses rated the participant in-basket responses. Two coders were assigned to each participant, so that each participant received two coder ratings. Each coder’s ratings for a participant were added together to get a total in-basket score ranging from the full possible range of 10-50, which was then averaged with the second coder’s total score. One final, in-basket score was used in the analyses. Two of the coders rated half of the participants (99 participants), and the other two coders rated the other half (99 participants). The participants were split up among the four coders in order to avoid a fatigue effect from each coder having to rate all 198 participant responses.

The two coders who rated the first 99 participant were compared in terms of their similarity in performance ratings. The correlation between performance ratings for Coders 1 and 2 was significant \( r = 0.27, p < 0.05 \). The correlation between performance ratings for Coders 3 and 4 was also significant \( r = 0.30, p < 0.05 \). See Figure 2 for a graph of the distribution of coder performance ratings.

Over all eight study conditions, the minimum score was 20, and the maximum was 48.50 out of 50 points. The mean for all participants was 36.74 \( (SD = 5.95) \). The variance throughout the possible scores (10-50 points) was more represented in the higher brackets (10-20 = 0
participants; 20-29 points = 31 participants; 30-39 points = 94 participants; 40-49 points = 61 participants). The lack of participants at the lower brackets (i.e., 10-20 points) suggests a possible bias in the coder rating system. See Table 2 for a list of mean in-basket performance scores for each condition.

*Control variables.* Positive and negative affect and demographics were measured. Positive and negative affect were measured using the Positive and Negative Affective Scale, and was assessed on a daily level (i.e., “Read each item and indicate to what extent you have felt this way TODAY; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Ten items assessed positive affect and ten items assessed negative affect. The rating scale is Likert-type ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The reliability of the negative affect items was an alpha of 0.83, while the positive affect items had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.92. The demographics measured included age, sex, undergraduate major, Scholastic Aptitude Test score, experience with computers, and experience with in-basket exercises. None of the control variables were used in the final analyses.
RESULTS

*T*-tests, correlations, regression analyses, and ANOVA were used to test the five hypotheses. Means and standard deviations of in-basket performance scores are presented by condition in Table 2. No demographic or control variables were used in the analyses. Variables were only controlled for in moderated regression when adding independent variables in Step 1 and/or 2 before the interaction term.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that level of self-efficacy would lead to performance on the in-basket task. This was supported with regression in that self-reported SE predicted in-basket task performance across all eight conditions after controlling for self-reported time pressure and role ambiguity levels in Step 1 ($\Delta R^2 (1, 185) = 0.04, \beta = 0.21, p < .05$). The confidence rating of participants after the SE manipulation predicted performance above and beyond time pressure and role ambiguity. A second look at the relationship between SE and performance tested the main effect of SE on performance, predicting that the overall mean performance of the high SE conditions would be greater than the overall mean performance of the low SE conditions. This was supported with a *t*-test in that the mean performance of the high self-efficacy conditions ($M = 37.60, SD = 5.92$) was significantly higher than the performance of the low self-efficacy conditions ($M = 35.81, SD = 5.87; t (196) = 2.14, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 2 predicted an association between time pressure and in-basket task performance, and was not supported. A *t*-test revealed no differences in performance between the two high time pressure ($M = 37.73, SD = 5.51$) and two low time pressure conditions ($M = 37.43, SD = 6.63; t (88) = -0.24, p > .05$). The correlation between self-reported time pressure and in-basket task performance was also insignificant ($r = 0.10, p > .05$).
Hypothesis 3 used regression analysis to test for a moderating effect of time pressure on the SE-performance relationship. Regression did not support time pressure as a moderator of this relationship between SE and task performance ($\Delta R^2 (1, 83) = 0.00, \beta = .02, p > .05$). Self-reported time pressure and SE were controlled for in Steps 1 and 2 before the interaction term. ANOVA was also used to compare the differences in performance among the four time pressure conditions. There was no interaction effect among the four time pressure and self-efficacy conditions ($F (1, 89) = 0.06, p > .05$). The relationship between SE and task performance was not affected by the level of time pressure that was imposed on participants.

Hypothesis 4 predicted a negative relationship between role ambiguity and performance and was not supported. A $t$-test indicated that there was not a significant difference in performance between the high and low role ambiguity conditions. Participants in the high role ambiguity conditions ($M = 35.41, SD = 6.60$) did not perform significantly better on the in-basket task than participants in the low role ambiguity conditions ($M = 37.43, SD = 6.63$; $t (84) = -1.38, p > .05$). The correlation between self-rated role ambiguity and in-basket task performance was also not significant ($r = 0.14, p > .05$).

Hypothesis 5 hypothesized a moderating effect of role ambiguity on the SE-performance relationship. Regression analysis did not support role ambiguity as a moderator of the relationship between self-efficacy and in-basket task performance. The relationship between SE and task performance was the same regardless of which role ambiguity level the participants experienced, after entering role ambiguity and SE in Step 1 and 2 ($\Delta R^2 (1, 79) = 0.01, \beta = 0.08, p > .05$). No interaction effect between role ambiguity and SE was found with ANOVA, meaning there did not appear to be an interaction effect among the four role ambiguity and SE conditions in terms of in-basket performance ($F (1, 85) = 3.01, p > .05$). This suggests that the relationship
between self-efficacy and in-basket performance was not influenced by the role ambiguity manipulation.
The current study investigated the effects of stressors on in-basket task performance. Undergraduates completed an in-basket task with varying levels of stressors in order to measure the effect of these manipulations on in-basket task performance. In addition, this study attempted to alter level of participant self-efficacy in order to study the interaction effect between SE and stressors. In general, the results of this study suggest that in the context of an in-basket task, self-efficacy has an effect on in-basket performance. Time pressure and role ambiguity did not have a main or moderating effect on in-basket task performance.

The relationship between self-efficacy and in-basket performance complements the past literature on the SE-performance relationship (Bandura, 1997; Barling, & Beattie, 1983; Bouffard-Bouchard, 2001; Gist, & Mitchell, 1992). Generally, SE has been found to have a positive, linear relationship with performance (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984). Higher levels of SE have been linked to better outcomes on many types of performance tasks (e.g., vocabulary activities, sales performance). In this study, higher levels of SE were linked to higher levels of in-basket task performance. Regression analysis indicated a relationship between self-rated SE and coder ratings of performance. In addition, a t-test found a significant difference between the mean in-basket performance of the high SE and low SE conditions. This finding replicates past research on the positive SE-performance relationship (Bandura, 1997).

Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted a main effect of time pressure on performance, as well as an interaction effect between time pressure and SE. Neither of these expectations was supported by the analyses. Time pressure did not influence in-basket performance either directly or through moderation. Past research indicates time pressure as a possible variable affecting performance outcomes (Klein, 1996; Kobbeltvedt, Brun, & Laberg, 2005). Although the time pressure
The manipulation was significant, time pressure did not appear to have an effect on performance. One question that would clarify this lack of significance would be further look at the non-linear effects of stressors on performance, which has found support across previous studies. Additionally, the time limit given to participants in this study may not have been short enough to elicit significant performance deficits.

In hypotheses 4 and 5, role ambiguity was expected to have a main effect on in-basket performance, as well as an interaction effect with SE. Neither a main nor moderating effect was found relating role ambiguity to in-basket task performance. It was expected that those who received higher role ambiguity in the in-basket instructions would show lower mean performance on the in-basket task. A negative relationship between role ambiguity and performance has been established in past literature but was not replicated in these results (Abramis, 1994B; McEnrue, 1984). An interaction effect was also expected between role ambiguity and SE. Role ambiguity was thought to be a moderator of the SE-performance relationship, meaning that SE would have had a greater influence on performance in the low role ambiguity conditions than in the high role ambiguity conditions.

Limitations

The current sample was comprised of undergraduates, which could have possibly presented a problem to the degree of variance in performance. However, it does not appear that the use of undergraduates was a large problem in this study other than motivating them to take the exercise seriously. In regard to the variance of performance on the in-basket task, both the range and the distribution of scores on the in-basket were varied enough to suggest that this in-basket can produce a range of performance outcomes. Although the descriptive statistics of the in-basket performance ratings may not appear to be a problem, personal experience with the
participants suggests that motivation to complete this task should be increased. A number of
participants did not take the in-basket as seriously as someone applying for a real job would,
indicated by skipping some questions and writing incomplete responses to questions (i.e., “I
don’t know what I would do”). Due to both the applied and open-ended nature of an in-basket,
future studies may find more accurate results with an employed population that is more
motivated to perform well on open-ended response functions (Dukerich, Milliken, & Cowan,
1990; Shippmann, Prien, & Katz, 1990). Instructions in this study indicated to participants that
the in-basket instrument could be indicative of their future performance as managers; however,
this may not have been strong enough as an incentive to achieve a wide variance in performance.
Thus, providing rewards such as money for performance on the task might increase desire to
complete the exercise seriously.

Another way to improve this study would be to strengthen the time pressure and role
ambiguity manipulations. Particularly with an open-ended response methodology, the amount of
time a participant has to complete the instrument may affect their results regardless of if they
dealt with the time pressure appropriately or not. People who receive less time to create open-ended responses will most likely not be able to output as much information as someone receiving more time. Thus, the time pressure variable should be manipulated carefully to not become a confound. The time pressure stressor is primarily focused at forcing the participant to work quickly and prioritize in order to complete the task in the time allotted. However, an attempt to
shorten the time allotted may reduce performance simply because the participant cannot
complete the assignment fully, not because the participant could not prioritize appropriately.
Time pressure has been manipulated in past studies in a more controlled environment (e.g.,
computer displays, forced choice survey responses; Adelman, Yeo, Miller, 2006; Kobbeltvedt,
However, in an open-ended context such as an in-basket, time pressure is more difficult to manipulate without becoming a confound. In order to separate the effects of time pressure out from other variables present in an in-basket, more time should be spent in the instructions stressing that time will be very limited and the participant will have to rush. One suggestion would be to pilot test the in-basket in an untimed setting in order to find out what the optimal time is for completing the in-basket. From there, decisions could be made about how much time to actually give all participants to complete the in-basket. In addition, stronger wording in the instructions should be used to create more psychological time pressure. A full page could be used for participants in the high time pressure condition to stress the need to work quickly (e.g., “The upcoming exercise will be very difficult to complete in the time you are given. WORK QUICKLY TO FINISH IN THE TIME ALOTTED”).

The role ambiguity manipulation was not significant could be made more severe as well in order to elicit effects on performance outcomes. In the current study, the low role ambiguity condition received extensive detail about how they were to go about completing the in-basket, as well as how they would be graded on their performance. The high role ambiguity conditions received a shorter version of this, minus the details about grading standards. A suggestion for the future would be to give the high role ambiguity conditions next to nothing in terms of instructions, possibly only giving them basic instructions (e.g., “This is an exercise used to select among future managers. Construct answers to each of the memos provided, and click the submit button when you are finished editing”).

Future directions

This study attempted to build on Brown, Jones, & Leigh (2005) by looking at the relationship between self-efficacy and performance in the context of moderating stressors. The
current study used a laboratory setting rather than the applied organization that Brown, et al. (2005) used. The benefits of this procedure include moving an applied tool that is currently in use to a controlled setting to act as a proxy to study stressors that exist in the workplace. The laboratory study was seen as the best place to remove extraneous organizational variables to get a closer look at the way performance is affect by stressors and self-beliefs. The study also attempted to look at a combination of variables, self-efficacy and time pressure/role ambiguity, to see how levels of each are related to performance. This is different from a more linear approach that has been used in the past to study stress, and attempted to combine two variables to simulate a more realistic work experience (Richard, & Diefendorff, 2006). Finally, this study was the first to combine multiple levels of stressors with an in-basket methodology, which allowed the study of an applied instrument in a situation where specific stressors could be highlighted and controlled.

With regard to future research, researchers should consider examining other individual characteristics such as regulatory and motivational variables that may interact with stressors. Individual characteristics other than SE may interact more strongly with stressors. Self-efficacy seemed to have a direct relationship with performance in this study, as confirmed in past research, but not a moderating effect with time pressure and role ambiguity. It is possible that other variables are at work here, such as motivational or regulatory characteristics. Rather than examining the SE for the task at hand, one suggestion could be to look at individual differences in regulatory focus and how they explain the relationship between stressors and performance. Regulatory Focus Theory assumes two branches of motivational regulation: promotion and prevention (Higgins, 1997). People with a promotion focus would tend to emphasize desires and potential gains, while people with a prevention focus would attend to obligations and potential
losses (Summerville, & Roese, 2008). This variable might interact with stressors more than SE.

A person with a high promotion focus would view internal goals (e.g., responding to the in-basket with quality answers) are more important than the external goals (e.g., pleasing the researcher by finishing the entire in-basket on time). Motivation to complete the in-basket in a laboratory setting might be affected by which type of regulatory focus a participant has.

Regulatory focus could possibly explain why stressors affect some participants’ performance more than others. Performance on the in-basket requires regulation and motivation due to its open-ended writing requirements, thus Regulatory Focus Theory might explain why some participants put more effort into their answers than others. Participants who are not concerned with external goals like being entered in a raffle might not be affected by external pressure (e.g., stressors) as easily. Individual variables like this might explain the motivation behind performing well and could interact with stressors to affect performance more than beliefs about ability to complete the task.

Manipulations should be pilot tested to find appropriate high and low levels of stressors. Open-ended material should be rated by multiple coders, four or more if possible, in order to eliminate the change in ratings that occurs when averaging only two coders’ ratings. Although they were significant, the correlations between coder performance ratings were not as high as desired. Adding more coders could help reduce this variance. Finally, a way to extend the current study would be to add more levels to each of the manipulations that were conducted (SE, time pressure, role ambiguity). It would be interesting to test for a non-linear effect in the SE-performance relationship. Having a low, “moderate,” and high level of SE manipulation would show interesting results with how each level of SE interacts with the stressors presented in the task.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. INSTRUMENT.
[In-Basket Exercise]

**General Instructions**

1. In this experiment you will complete an exercise that is used to predict future manager performance, and answer some questions about your experience taking the manager performance exercise.

Before beginning the full manager performance exercise, you will complete a short, sample version of what a manager performance exercise is like, and get feedback on your results. Then, you will move on to complete the full exercise.

[Positive and Negative Affect Scale]

Before beginning, please answer the following questions.

The following scale consists of a number of words and phrases that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and indicate to what extent you have felt this way TODAY:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Very slightly or not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Quite a bit</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
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</thead>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Strong</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Sample Manager Performance Exercise

Instructions

2a. During this assessment activity, you will play the role of Dr. J. Peters, principal at Peabody Middle School. You have been principal at this 6-8th grade, 650-student campus for seven years, having spent four years prior as an assistant principal at a middle school in a neighboring community. You do not have an assistant principal, but do have an excellent counselor, Mrs. Collins, who has assisted you with administrative issues. She is completing her principal certification.

You returned to your office this cool November morning after spending 3 days at the National Congress of Texas. You find the items below in your in-basket, including several from your secretary, Janis Polk.

Complete the following sample manager performance exercise by reading the items and taking appropriate action. Prioritize as you would with any items in your in-basket. Everything you decide or do must be in writing. You should always take as much action as you can with the information available to you, but you must also avoid making any assumptions that are not reasonably supported by the background information you have been given or by the in-basket material itself. Do not merely write descriptions of what you would write; write out the actual letters and memos. A blank calendar is included in your packet for your own personal use during this exercise.

Performance on manager performance exercises such as these are often used to predict future job performance. Manager performance exercises are good predictors of how a person will perform as a manager. Please try your best on this sample manager performance exercise.

2b. Skills Assessed:

Judgment
Problem Analysis
Information Collection
Sensitivity
Written Expression
Measurement and Evaluation
Organizational Oversight
Motivation
Legal and Regulatory Applications
Instructional Management
Philosophical and Cultural Understanding
Resource Allocation
During this assessment activity, you will play the role of Dr. J. Peters, principal at Peabody Middle School. You have been principal at this 6-8th grade, 650-student campus for seven years, having spent four years prior as an assistant principal at a middle school in a neighboring community. You do not have an assistant principal, but do have an excellent counselor, Mrs. Collins, who has assisted you with administrative issues. She is completing her principal certification.

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Performance on manager performance exercises are often used to predict future job performance. Manager performance exercises are good predictors of how a person will perform as a manager. Please try your best on this manager performance exercise.

**Sample Manager Performance Exercise**

You are now Dr. J. Peters, principal of Peabody Middle School. You find the following two memos in your in-basket. Click next only when you are completely finished responding to both memos.

(1) Read over the two memos.
(2) In the space provided, type out your responses to each memo. Be specific about the actions you will be taking to deal with these issues. **Write out your actual responses to the people who have sent you these memos.**

**Memo 1**

To: Dr. Peters  
From: Dr. J. Watson, Superintendent  
Date: Thursday, October 18 7:30 a.m.  
Re: Professional Growth Plan

____________________________________________________

Please submit your professional growth plan to my office by Friday of next week. After my review, we will set up a time to discuss any suggestions or recommendations.
I may have.

Memo 2

To: Dr. Peters
From: Mr. Jones
Subject: 7th-grade teacher
CC: Site-Based Interview Committee

After much debate, the site-based interview committee, which includes myself, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Clark, and Mrs. Grissom, would like to request an explanation regarding why our top choice for the 7th-grade teacher position was not the person hired. She was available to begin immediately. We spend many hours fulfilling our duties for this committee. If our recommendation is to be disregarded, we deserve an explanation.

Results of Sample Manager Performance Exercise

3a. The results of the sample manager performance exercise you just completed have been analyzed preliminarily. Results indicate that you performed extremely well on the sample exercise. Please continue on to the next page.

3b. The results of the sample manager performance exercise you just completed have been analyzed preliminarily. Results indicate that you performed poorly on the sample exercise. Please continue on to the next page.

4. Before beginning the full manager performance exercise, please answer the following questions.

[Self-Efficacy]

Based on how well you performed on the sample manager performance exercise, please answer the following questions regarding the manager performance exercise that you are ABOUT TO COMPLETE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...using judgment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...analyzing problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...collecting information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...sensitivity (being appropriate)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...delegation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...written expression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...evaluation (making appropriate decisions)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...organizational oversight (monitoring overall issues)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...motivating others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...following legal and regulatory procedures 1 2
...making decisions with current teaching practices in mind 1 2
...philosophical and cultural understanding (ethics, integrity) 1 2
...allocating resources appropriately 1 2

[Self-Efficacy]

On the upcoming manager performance exercise, rate how confident you are in your ability to perform the tasks listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Not at all confident</th>
<th>Not confident</th>
<th>Neither unconfident nor confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
<th>Very confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...using judgment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...analyzing problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...collecting information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...sensitivity (being appropriate)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...delegation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...written expression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...evaluation (making appropriate decisions)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...organizational oversight</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(monitoring overall issues)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...motivating others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...following legal and regulatory procedures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...making decisions with current teaching practices in mind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...philosophical and cultural understanding (ethics, integrity)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...allocating resources appropriately</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5a.

Manager Performance Exercise

Now please begin the full manager performance exercise.

Instructions

During this assessment activity, you will play the role of Dr. J. Peters, principal at Peabody Middle School. You have been principal at this 6-8th grade, 650-student campus for seven years,
having spent four years prior as an assistant principal at a middle school in a neighboring community. You do not have an assistant principal, but do have an excellent counselor, Mrs. Collins, who has assisted you with administrative issues. She is completing her principal certification.

You returned to your office this cool November morning after spending 3 days at the National Congress of Texas. You find the items below in your in-basket, including several from your secretary, Janis Polk.

Complete the following manager performance exercise by reading the items and taking appropriate action. Prioritize as you would with any items in your in-basket. Everything you decide or do must be in writing. You should always take as much action as you can with the information available to you, but you must also avoid making any assumptions that are not reasonably supported by the background information you have been given or by the in-basket material itself. Do not merely write descriptions of what you would write; write out the actual letters and memos. A blank calendar is included in your packet for your own personal use during this exercise.

Performance on exercises such as these are often used to predict future job performance. Manager performance exercises are good predictors of how a person will perform as a manager. Please try your best on this manager performance exercise.

5b. Manager Performance Exercise

Now please begin the full manager performance exercise.

Instructions

Skills Assessed:

Judgment
Problem Analysis
Information Collection
Sensitivity
Written Expression
Measurement and Evaluation
Organizational Oversight
Motivation
Legal and Regulatory Applications
Instructional Management
Philosophical and Cultural Understanding
Resource Allocation

During this assessment activity, you will play the role of Dr. J. Peters, principal at Peabody Middle School. You have been principal at this 6-8th grade, 650-student campus for seven years,
having spent four years prior as an assistant principal at a middle school in a neighboring community. You do not have an assistant principal, but do have an excellent counselor, Mrs. Collins, who has assisted you with administrative issues. She is completing her principal certification.

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Performance on manager performance exercises are often used to predict future job performance. Manager performance exercises are good predictors of how a person will perform as a manager. Please try your best on this manager performance exercise.

**Manager Performance Exercise**

**Memos**

You are now beginning the full manager performance exercise. Respond to each memo as if you are Dr. J. Peters and just found these memos in your inbox. Be as detailed as you can in your responses to the senders of the memos.

**Memo 1**

From the desk of Janis

Dr. Peters -

Suzie Watson was hurt on the playground today. Her parents picked her up and left a message saying they would be in the office on Monday afternoon to speak to you. Her injury, according to Velma, was not serious, but the parents left her office upset.

Mrs. Williams needs to discuss Craig Stanford (the potential ADHD student). She needs some advice. She is having difficulty with him in class.
Memo 2

Mrs. Jones,
I will pick Cindy up from school Wednesday at 1:30.
-Mr. Nelson

Dr. Peters -
I'm not sure about his custodial rights!
-Mrs. Jones

Memo 3

Dr. Peters,

I give up! I guess I need some help! I am having discipline problems with SEVERAL students. As a new teacher, I don't know what to do.

Mrs. Greenhorn

Memo 4

To: Dr. Peters
From: Dr. Helen Smith, Business Manager
Date: Friday, October 19 7:30 a.m.
Re: Over-Expenditure of Administrative Travel Funds

Recent campus budget analyses indicate that you had an over-expenditure in account #6400, which is your Administrative Travel Fund account, for the end of the last fiscal year. Please send an explanation of the over-expenditure.

Memo 5

Organization for the Protection of Our Children
Jeff Stewart, Chairperson
P.O. Box 33
Blissville, Texas 764XX
(254)555-4444

October 17, 19XX

Dr. J. Peters
Peabody Middle School
714 E. 12th Avenue
Blissville, Texas 764XX
Dear Dr. Peters,

I am writing as the chairperson of the Organization for the Protection of Our Children. There has been concern voiced within our organization over several literature selections that are required readings for language arts. We feel that inappropriate language and subject matter are used.

We would like to meet with you concerning this situation.

Thank you,
Jeff Stewart
Chairperson

Memo 6

Peabody Middle School
Transportation Department

Disciplinary Report

Student's Name: Aaron Westfall
Date: 10/18/XX
Bus #: 54
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Driver's Name: Buford Davis

Disciplinary Steps
1. First Offense - written warning and possible further disciplinary action.
2. Second Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 5 school days.
3. Third Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 10 school days.
4. Fourth Offense - student suspended from the bus for the remainder of the semester.

Driver's Report:
Student was running in bus while bus was moving.

Previous Action Taken by Driver:
First Offense - no previous action.

Memo 7

Peabody Middle School
Transportation Department

Disciplinary Report
Disciplinary Steps
1. First Offense - written warning and possible further disciplinary action.
2. Second Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 5 school days.
3. Third Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 10 school days.
4. Fourth Offense - student suspended from the bus for the remainder of the semester.

Driver's Report:
Student was fighting with Jon Sanderson after Sanderson threw a football and hit Greer in the head.

Previous Action Taken by Driver:
Second Offense - previously disciplined for fighting.

Memo 8
Peabody Middle School
Transportation Department

Disciplinary Report

Student's Name: Jon Sanderson
Date: 10/18/XX
Bus #: 54
Time: 3:40 p.m.
Driver's Name: Buford Davis

Disciplinary Steps
1. First Offense - written warning and possible further disciplinary action.
2. Second Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 5 school days.
3. Third Offense - student suspended from the bus for not less than 10 school days.
4. Fourth Offense - student suspended from the bus for the remainder of the semester.

Driver's Report:
Student was fighting with Damon Greer. Sanderson threw a football and hit Greer in the head, which provoked the fight.

Previous Action Taken by Driver:
First offense - no previous action.
Memo 9

From the desk of Janis -

Dr. Peters -

Mrs. Butterworth is DEMANDING an explanation of the 504 Committee's decision not to identify Craig Butterworth for 504 intervention. She insists that Craig CAN NOT meet the requirements of physical education because of his weight. SHE WAS FURIOUS!!!

Memo 10

To: Dr. Peters
From: Ms. J. Humphreys, Asst. Superintendent
Date: Friday, October 19 2:12 p.m.
Re: Math Scores

--------------------------------------------

I am concerned about the low math scores for the sixth grade. Please submit a copy of your campus' action plan addressing the weak areas by the end of the next week.

Memo 11

Dr. P. -

As one of your teachers, I am excited that the overall TAAS/TAKS reading scores for this past spring show an improvement, however, there was a drop of 15% in the 8th-grade Hispanic test results compared to their performance in the 7th grade. Could we meet and discuss this later?

Mrs. Johnston

Memo 12

To: Dr. Peters
From: Mrs. Collins, Counselor

--------------------------------------------

I think that many of the referrals that come to my office are sent because the teacher does not know what to do with them instructionally. I wonder if a special program geared to promoting self-esteem and focusing on special interest topics that could be
related to TEKS and TAKS might spark them.

6. 

Follow-Up Questions

[Self-Rated Performance]

You have now completed the manager performance exercise. Please answer the following questions regarding your experience with the exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree nor agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I prioritized work items appropriately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I analyzed issues and made appropriate decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I monitored effectively events and issues occurring on campus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collected additional information about issues and events.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I dealt appropriately with human differences and concerns.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made appropriate decisions based on legal and regulatory rules and procedures.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I delegated responsibilities appropriately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The decisions I made were in alignment with appropriate instructional practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made decisions based on integrity and ethical standards.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I allocated resources in an appropriate manner based on thoughtful decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I exhibited quality written communication skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Self-Efficacy]

Now, please rate how well you think you would perform if you were to complete a similar manager performance exercise in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...using judgment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...analyzing problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...collecting information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...sensitivity (being appropriate) 1 2
...delegation 1 2
...written expression 1 2
...evaluation (making appropriate decisions) 1 2
...organizational oversight (monitoring overall issues) 1 2
...motivating others 1 2
...following legal and regulatory procedures 1 2
...making decisions with current teaching practices in mind 1 2
...philosophical and cultural understanding (ethics, integrity) 1 2
...allocating resources appropriately 1 2

[Time Pressure and Role Ambiguity]

The following statements are about your experience with the manager performance exercise you just completed. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree nor agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This exercise required me to work very fast.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This exercise required me to work very hard.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This exercise left me with little time to get things done.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a great deal to be done in this exercise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had to do more work than I could do well.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was certain how to go about getting the exercise done (the methods to use).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew what the best way (approach) was to go about getting the exercise done.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew how to get the exercise done (what procedures to use).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew when I should be doing a particular aspect (part) of the exercise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew what was considered to be satisfactory performance on this exercise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was clear to me what was considered acceptable performance on this exercise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew what level of performance was considered acceptable on this exercise.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Were you aware of this study's hypotheses prior to participation in the study?
Yes 2
No 1

Sex
Male 1
Female 2

Age: ______
College major: ______
Approximate SAT score: ______

Past experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience with computers:</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous experience with in-basket exercises:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Quite a lot</th>
<th>Extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Congratulations. You are now finished with the experiment. PLEASE DO NOT DISCUSS THIS STUDY WITH ANYONE UNTIL AFTER THIS SEMESTER HAS FINISHED. Discussing this study with other students may alter the results of this study.

Please click submit and raise your hand. The experimenter will give you a receipt for 1 hour of experiment participation. Thank you for your participation!

Notes:
2a. High role ambiguity instructions.
2b. Low role ambiguity instructions.
5a. High role ambiguity instructions.
5b. Low role ambiguity instructions.
*Time pressure instructions were added to both the sample and real in-basket general instructions. They were either “this exercise should not require more than 45 minutes” (low time pressure conditions) or “this exercise should not require more than 45 minutes. Work as quickly as possible to make sure that you complete the entire manager performance exercise before time runs out” (high time pressure conditions).
APPENDIX B. IN-BASKET SCORING GUIDE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither disagree nor agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prioritizes work items appropriately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Analyzes issues and makes appropriate decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Monitors effectively events and issues occurring on the campus.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Collects additional information about issues and events.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Deals appropriately with human differences and concerns.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Delegates responsibilities appropriately.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Decisions are made in alignment with appropriate instructional practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Makes decisions based on integrity and ethical standards.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Allocates resources in an appropriate manner based on thoughtful decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Exhibits quality written communication skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Conceptual model of relationships among study variables.
Figure 2. Distribution of coder ratings of in-basket performance.
Table 1. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among all measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In-Basket Sample</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>6.13</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. In-Basket Real</td>
<td>36.74</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>.760**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Age</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Positive Affect</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Negative Affect</td>
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<td>.53</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Computer Experience</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.198**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. In-Basket Experience</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>.145*</td>
<td>.246**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.170*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>49.88</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>.151*</td>
<td>.142*</td>
<td>.194**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.181*</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Time Pressure***</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.225**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.01</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Role Ambiguity****</td>
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<td>.77</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.02</td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td>.148*</td>
<td>.347**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*** Time pressure in this case is self-rated time pressure that was used in the manipulation check.
**** Role ambiguity in this case is self-rated role ambiguity that was used in the manipulation check.
Table 2. Mean in-basket performance scores by condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High RA High SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High RA Low SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low RA High SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Low RA Low SE</td>
<td>36.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>High TP High SE</td>
<td>38.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>High TP Low SE</td>
<td>37.25</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>37.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Low TP Low SE</td>
<td>35.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: RA = role ambiguity, SE = self-efficacy, TP = time pressure.