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ARE WE BETTER AT JUDGING TRAITS WE SHARE WITH TARGETS? RATER PERSONALITY, TRAIT ACCESSIBILITY AND JUDGEMENT ACCURACY

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Researchers and practitioners in the personnel selection and assessment field are interested in understanding the characteristics of a good rater. However, few studies have so far examined raters' personality traits and trait accessibility as predictors of accuracy. The present study investigated the relationship between these individual difference constructs and judgement accuracy for specific traits. Respondents from a field sample (N = 223) of managers and staff employed in financial services completed the survey questionnaire and rated the personalities of five hypothetical interview applicants depicted in vignettes. Our results showed that raters' personality traits and judgement accuracy for corresponding target traits were unrelated. In other words, raters were not more accurate at judging traits they shared with targets. However, we found that certain personality traits such as agreeableness and openness to experience were related to trait accessibility for the same trait—raters high on these traits also tended to perceive others in terms of them. In addition, accessibility for certain traits such as extroversion and openness to experience predicted judgement accuracy for the same traits. Therefore, these findings enrich our understanding of rater individual differences that may affect judgement accuracy.

Keywords: accuracy, personality judgement, similarity, accessibility, trait

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

ARE WE BETTER AT JUDGING TRAITS WE SHARE WITH TARGETS? RATER PERSONALITY, TRAIT ACCESSIBILITY AND JUDGEMENT ACCURACY

Researchers and practitioners in the personnel selection and assessment field have often tried to identify the characteristics of a good rater (e.g., Christiansen, Wolcott-Burnam, Janovics, Burns, & Quirk, 2005; Powell & Goffin, 2009). An understanding of the factors which influence judgement accuracy can assist organisations to select and train interviewers, assessors and raters. Whilst earlier research (Letzring, 2008) suggests that raters' cognitive ability and motivation may affect judgement accuracy, the search continues for other factors which determine accurate judgements.

In recent studies, there has been a focus on the role of similarity between raters and targets in the process of accurate judgements (e.g., Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995; Letzring, 2010; Sait, 2014). For example, one recent study examined the role of gender and ethnic similarity between the rater and the target as a predictor of judgement accuracy (Letzring, 2010). The results suggested that the degree of similarity of gender and ethnicity between rater and target might affect judgement accuracy. On the basis of theories which propose that judgement accuracy is made possible when raters have high levels of general similarity to a target group (Ambady et al., 1995; Ames, 2004; Letzring, 2010), further research is needed to understand which other aspects of similarity between the rater and target may contribute to judgement accuracy.

Previous research that focused on surface-level characteristics (e.g., demographic similarity between the judge and target; Letzring, 2010) has not considered the effect of similarity on 'deeper-level' characteristics, such as personality, on rating outcomes such as judgement accuracy. For example, if a rater scores high on extraversion, would such a rater be able to rate extraversion more accurately in a target? In order to address this gap, Sait (2014) studied the relationship between rater–target personality similarity and judgement accuracy. She used Funder's (1995) realistic accuracy model (RAM) as a framework for understanding the conditions that make accuracy in personality

judgements more or less likely (Connelly & Ones, 2010). RAM was essentially derived from Brunswik's (1952) lens model (which maintained that perception cues informed judges' predictions). According to RAM, the process of accurate judgment requires that raters *detect* and *utilise* behaviour cues correctly (Funder, 1995). Therefore, the degree of personality similarity between judge and target can be regarded as the 'lens' which enables the rater to make more accurate inferences about targets who share the same traits.

On this premise, Sait (2014) posited that when a rater is high on a personality trait, the rater would be more likely to detect and utilise behavioural cues associated with that trait more proficiently than a rater that is not dominant on this trait. Results of her study, conducted with students, indicated negligible effects *between* rater–target personality trait similarity and accuracy. In particular, raters' 'Big Five' traits (conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience and extraversion) were unrelated to accurate judgements of corresponding traits in targets (e.g., Sait, 2014).

However, this study had two drawbacks. First, it was conducted in a laboratory setting, that is, the study employed student participants. This raises the question of whether the results would have been different if employee participants had been used, As such, the generalisability of these findings to a real-world context have not been tested. The second drawback was that it did not explain exactly how raters' person perception processes may be affected by their personality traits, such as through their trait chronic accessibility. Chronic accessibility is the notion that an individual makes use of perceptual 'filters' to make sense of people and situations (Higgins, King, & Marvin, 1982).

Trait accessibility may be attributed to personality (Higgins, 2000), because personality schemas are stored in our social cognitive 'storage bins' (Shen, 2014). As individuals frequently form judgements about others' personality (Funder, 2012), the chronically accessible schema of their dominant personality traits may be located at the top of their storage bin. In other words, a judge's higher standing on a trait may be associated with its higher salience in their perceptual schemas. For example, an

introverted rater's chronically accessible schema of introversion should be at the top of their storage bin. As the judges' dominant trait may become salient, the rater may develop into an expert in judging that particular trait (Higgins, 2000).

We do not yet fully understand the role of chronic accessibility in judgement accuracy. For example, it is possible that trait accessibility may facilitate raters' cue detection and utilisation processes. More specifically, personality similarity between the rater and target may enhance the rater's ability to accurately detect and utilise the cues exhibited by the target (Chandler, Konrath, & Schwarz, 2009), primarily as a result of enhanced accessibility. As such, investigating the role that chronic accessibility plays in the relationship between rater–target personality trait similarity and accuracy in personality judgements deserves further attention.

It is important to investigate judgement accuracy of personality in an organisational setting. Prior research has demonstrated that raters' judgments in interviews are heavily influenced by judgments of the candidate's personality (Harris, 1999; Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001; Salgado & Moscoso, 2002; Van Dam, 2003). Therefore, interview ratings may be affected by judges' personality or chronic accessibility, which can potentially be detrimental or advantageous to the organisation, if identified early. The results of the present study may be of particular relevance to human resource staffing, as they shed light on the individual difference constructs affecting rating accuracy. This information may be useful to select and train raters accordingly.

Study background

In order to investigate the relationship between raters' personality traits and trait accessibility as predictors of accuracy, the process of accurate personality judgement must be considered.

The Process of Accurate Personality Judgement

Theory. Personality judgements can be defined as a rater's (the person making inferences) effort to identify the psychological properties of the target (the person being observed), to aid in explaining the target's past behaviour and predicting his or her

future behaviour (Funder, 1995). Accuracy can be defined as the true standard against which judgement is compared (Funder, 2012).

Process. Accurate personality judgements are made possible by cognitive and interpersonal processes and these are addressed by the RAM (Funder, 1995; 2012). The RAM is a conceptualisation model on the process of accurate judgement and was essentially derived from Brunswik's lens model (Letzring, 2008).

The RAM stipulates four stages for accurate judgement of a target's personality traits:

- the target has to do something that is *relevant* to the personality characteristic being rated, for example, the target displays enthusiastic behaviour;
- the cue has to be *available* to the rater, for example, the target displays enthusiastic behaviour in the presence of the rater;
- the cue has to be *detected* by the rater, for example, has to see and pick up the enthusiastic behaviour; and
- the rater has to *utilise* the cue appropriately to form a judgement, for example the rater must not misinterpret the cue as another behaviour (Letzring, 2008, p. 915).

Furthermore, personality psychologists have conventionally focused on relevance and availability (RA), as they are keen to understand how traits result in the manifestation of trait-relevant behaviour (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995).

Figure 1 below outlines the stages of RAM.

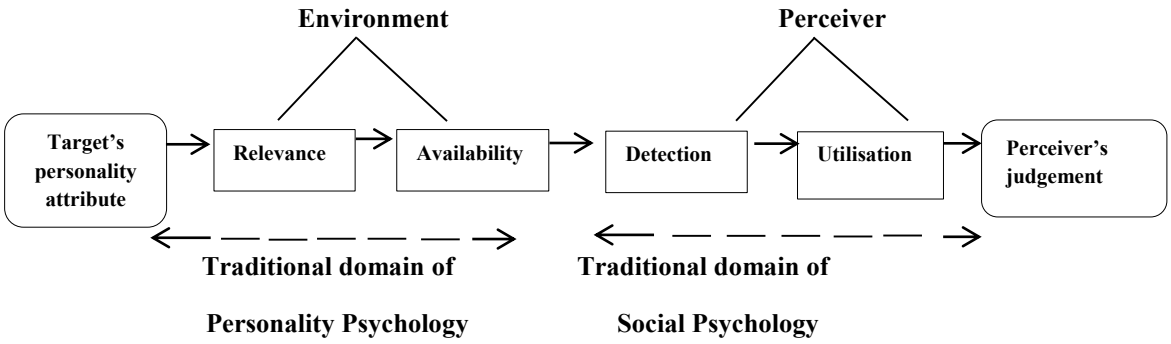

Figure 1. A model of the process of accurate personality judgement, Funder (1995)

Moderators of accurate judgement. For over 90 years, accuracy researchers have been investigating the role of moderators in accurate judgements. According to Funder (1995), the moderators of accurate judgement can be categorised into four elements of accuracy: good rater, good target, good trait and good information.

- *Good rater.* A good rater is a rater who can accurately rate the target (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995). Amongst other elements, good raters require vast and relevant information and should be able to detect and utilise the cues appropriately (Letzring, 2008). Recent research on good raters indicates that judgement accuracy is linked to several personality characteristics. Amongst many other characteristics, being a good rate encompasses:
    - knowing how personality is related to behaviour;
    - being in pursuit of accuracy;
    - knowing useful information about their targets; and
    - high levels of general intelligence, accuracy and cognitively ability (Letzring, 2008).

    Moreover, Taft (1955) noted characteristics such as gender, emotional stability, social detachment, self-insight, social skills, intelligence and aesthetic ability. Therefore, we can expect personality characteristics to have an effect on accuracy.

- *Good target.* Good target can essentially be described as the degree of relative ease with which a rater can rate a target (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995). Good targets are those with a coherent personality, those who are transparent and behave consistently across real-life and experimental situations (Funder, 1999). Moreover, a good target discharges good information. Furthermore, certain traits might be more evident in some targets than in others (Funder, 1999). As discussed above, the target may affect the degree to which the rater can accurately judge the trait underway.

- *Good trait.* A good trait can essentially be described as the degree of relative ease with which the trait can be observed and interpreted (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995). Many researchers held the notion that

there are some personality traits which are easier for raters to rate accurately than others (John & Robins, 1993). Funder (1995) agrees with this perspective and reports two vital dimensions for ascertaining accuracy across the rating of traits: high visibility of traits and low evaluativeness of traits. Traits that are high in visibility consist of tendencies which are externally expressed (e.g., behaviour). In contrast, traits that are low in visibility consist of internal tendencies which are not clearly accessible to others (e.g., feelings and thoughts) (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995). Traits which are high in evaluativeness are those traits which social value is placed on the individual's standing on that particular trait (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Therefore, the visibility and evaluativeness of a trait can affect the rater's ability to judge the trait accurately.

- *Good information.* Good information can essentially be described as the degree of accuracy of the cues that are available for the trait (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1995). There are two important aspects to consider when it comes to good information: quantity and quality (Funder, 1999). With regard to quantity, it is important to consider whether the rater has spent enough time with the target to rate the target accurately (frequency of interaction). It is suggested that once the rater is better acquainted with the target the rater's rating of the target will be more accurate. With regard to quality, the information must be relevant for the rater to make an accurate rating. Furthermore, it is suggested that when the rater has greater information, then the rater's rating of the target will be more accurate (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder, 1999).

The Present Study

The aim of this study was to empirically investigate the relationship between the rater's personality traits, trait accessibility and judgement accuracy. We expected that raters would be more accurate in judging traits which they share with the target because certain traits might be more accessible to them than others, as a function of their own personality. We hypothesised that chronic accessibility is the intermediary

explanatory mechanism which may help explain the relationship between rater-target trait similarity and the accuracy of personality judgements.

Rater traits, trait accessibility and accuracy: A conceptual framework

As the present study is complex in nature, a figure may aid in playing a supportive role for the verbal presentation. See Figure 2 below for a graphical representation of the hypotheses of this study. This figure represents the variables which were investigated during this study. The aim of this conceptual framework was to investigate the relationship between rater's traits, trait accessibility and trait judgement accuracy.

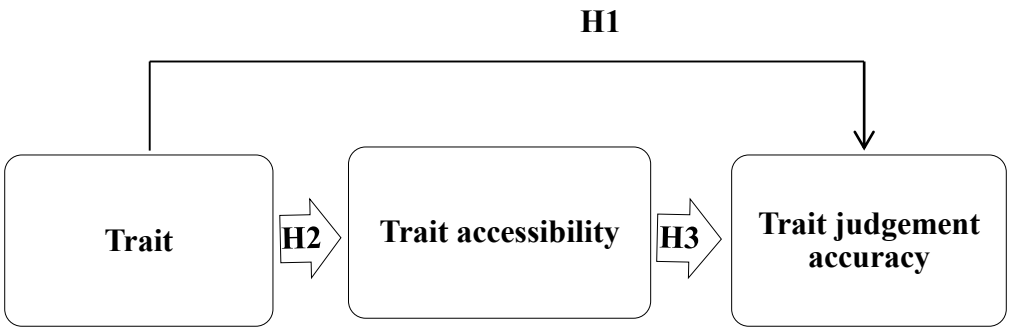

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for variables in the present study.

Rater Personality and Trait Judgement Accuracy

The link between rater personality and trait judgement accuracy.

Rater traits and accuracy. Some raters can be good at judging certain traits, but bad at judging other traits (Funder, 1995). This phenomenon can be due to variations in the rater's knowledge across the traits or the differential ego involvement regarding the traits being assessed. Differential knowledge might be the result of the rater's life experience or explicit teachings. This is connected to the rater's differential cognitive availability of specific traits, thus making these traits easier to perceive and to rate accurately than others (Funder, 1995). Furthermore, trait judgement accuracy can be explained by a number of other factors, such as the rater's personality characteristics.

Research indicates that judgement accuracy may be linked to several personality characteristics of raters (Davis & Kraus, 1997). These characteristics includes; bravery,

social skills independency, human nature experience and the level of intelligence and maturity (Adams, 1927; Allport, 1937; Vernon, 1933). Another study revealed that there were high levels of self–other agreements for male raters who rated themselves positively, having interpersonal skills and not rating themselves as anxious or concerned about other's thoughts about them (Kolar, 1995). Furthermore, Christiansen et al. (2005) found no relation between self–other agreement and extroversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience or emotional stability.

Other research indicated that openness to experience was found to be negatively related to judgement accuracy (Lippa & Dietz, 2000; Sait, 2014). According to Lippa and Dietz (2000), raters who scored high on openness to experience were more likely to be thoughtful, thus refraining from engaging in intuitive ratings of emotional traits. In sum, these studies suggest that differences in raters' personality characteristics may affect judgement accuracy, but empirical results are inconsistent.

Accuracy for judging specific traits. Empirical research shows a correspondence between the accuracy differences across the traits of the five-factor model and differences in evaluativeness and visibility (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Zillig et al., 2002). For example, extroversion (high in visibility and low in evaluativeness) has been the most accurately rated personality trait, especially in instances when the rater was unacquainted with the target. In essence, extroversion was found to be a high-visibility trait, as extroversion tendencies (e.g., socially outgoing, energetic) were associated with expressive social behaviours. Moreover, extroversion measures make reference to behavioural tendencies as opposed to thought or feelings (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Zillig et al., 2002).

Other research revealed the most accurately judged trait is extroversion and the lowest is agreeableness (Carney, Colvin, & Hall, 2007). Furthermore, rater's ratings of agreeableness (high evaluativeness) have shown low inter-rater reliability and a minimal correlation with self–other ratings (Borkenau & Liebler, 1992; Connolly, Kavanagh, & Viswesvaran, 2007; John & Robins, 1993).

In another study, openness to experience and emotional stability (neuroticism) were found to be low-visibility traits, as those tendencies described internal thoughts

and affective states (Zillig et. al, 2002). Traits such as neuroticism, openness to experience and agreeableness require sufficient exposure time to achieve similar levels of accuracy for traits such as extroversion (Carney et al., 2007).

Rater-target similarity and accuracy. Trait judgement accuracy can also be explained by the degree of similarity between the rater and the target. The role of rater–target gender and ethnicity similarity in accurate personality judgements has been researched by Letzring (2010). The levels were: same gender and ethnicity, same gender, same ethnicity and different gender and ethnicity. The findings of the study revealed that amongst female raters, gender and ethnic similarity between raters and targets was associated (r = .59) with the accurate judgement of the target's personality (Letzring, 2010). Thus, judgement accuracy may be enhanced when raters and targets are similar at gender and ethnicity level. However, this finding may be true for demographic variables, but might not be the case for personality traits, as certain traits affect judgement accuracy (Lippa & Dietz, 2000), thus, leaving us to ponder on the role of rater–target personality trait similarity in the accuracy of personality judgements.

As earlier mentioned, the role of personality similarity between the judge and target, on judgment accuracy as an outcome, has not been studied before. In order to ascertain whether we are better at judging the big-five traits that we share with targets, Sait (2014) distributed a survey questionnaire to a convenience sample of university students. The study's findings revealed that no significant positive relationships were found between rater–target personality trait similarity and accuracy in personality judgements. Thus, raters' levels of agreeableness (r = .04, p > .05), conscientiousness (r = -.05, p >.05), extroversion (r = -.21, p > .05), openness to experience *(*r = .09, p > .05) and neuroticism (r = .01, p > .05) were not positively related to the judgement accuracy of the corresponding traits across the targets.

A limitation of Sait's (2014) study was the generalisability of the results. The sample consisted of university students, which is not representative of the population of working adults, thus, decreasing the external validity of the study to the workplace setting. Therefore, we are left with a pressing question: Would Sait's results have been different had the study been conducted with employees in the workplace? There is

reason to believe that the results may be different, given the differences in rating context. For example, there are differences between rater types that may affect raters' ability to rate targets accurately (Sagie & Magnezy, 1997). The present study aimed to address the limitations of earlier research by replicating the results of earlier studies (Sait, 2014) in a field sample of employees, as opposed to university students.

Considering the research discussed above, the research question to be investigated is, "what is the relationship between raters' traits and accuracy of judging corresponding traits, that is, is accuracy for judging a trait such as extroversion higher when the rater is also an extrovert?" Therefore, is rating a trait accurately more likely when the rater is also high on that trait?

> ***Hypotheses.*** *H1: Raters' personality traits are positively related to trait judgement accuracy. More specifically,*
>
> *H1a: Raters' level of extroversion is positively related to the accuracy of judging extroversion.*
>
> *H1b: Raters' level of agreeableness is positively related to the accuracy of judging agreeableness.*
>
> *H1c: Raters' level of conscientiousness is positively related to the accuracy of judging conscientiousness.*
>
> *H1d: Raters' level of neuroticism is positively related to the accuracy of judging neuroticism.*
>
> *H1e: Raters' level of openness to experience is positively related to the accuracy of judging openness to experience.*

Rater Personality and Chronic Accessibility

The link between rater personality and chronic accessibility.[1] The personality of a rater will determine whether a trait is accessible for the rater. It is

[1] In this paper, we use the term 'trait accessibility', 'chronically accessible traits', 'chronically accessible constructs' and 'construct accessibility' interchangeably.

possible for raters to have stored the same traits in their memory, but the raters can differ in using the construct to interpret information (Higgins et al., 1982; Srull & Wyer, 1980). In order to make sense of a situation, in relation to oneself, it is suggested that people draw upon information stored in their cognitive structures (Chandler et al., 2009). Therefore the theory of chronic accessibility and the 'storage bin' concept can be used to understand this phenomenon.

Chronic accessibility. Chronic accessibility can be regarded as a primary function of knowledge representations. Chronic accessibility is the notion that an individual utilises filters or lenses to make sense of a particular situation (Higgins et al., 1982). For example, when a particular stimulus is part of one's self, then information on that particular stimulus ought to come to one's mind when one thinks about oneself (Chandler et al., 2009).

'Storage bin'. The storage bin concept (Wyer & Srull, 1989) explains chronic accessibility as the storage unit where schemas are stored, retrieved and activated. We store information (schemas) in our storage bin and a cue triggers the recall of that information. For example, when a rater encounters introversion stimuli, such rater will ask him- or herself whether introversion describes him- or herself; thus, activating the introversion schema. The rater will then draw upon his or her storage bin to interpret stimuli in the environment. Furthermore, due to the frequent activation of certain traits, it is argued that certain traits are at the top of this storage bin and therefore more accessible (Shen, 2004; Sulsky & Balzer, 1988; Wyer & Srull, 1989).

Empirical research. We engage in similarity judgements to allow us to rationalise our world by categorising information, classifying people and entities, and for us to make rapid generalisations when we come across something new and previously uncategorised (Sacco, Scheu, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2003). An individual engages in self-referential processing by making sense of the situation in relation to themselves (Funder, 1995). When making inferences about other people, we might engage in using the phrase "does it describe me?" (Bower & Gilligan, 1979; Chandler et al., 2009; Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977). In essence, when a rater comes across stimulus information, he or she will interpret the information based on the degree of

similarity ("does it describe me?"). Therefore, the rater's dominant trait is posited to be positively related to chronic accessibility.

Against the background of the argument presented above, we posit a relationship between raters' personality traits and trait accessibility:

Hypotheses*. H2: Raters' personality traits are positively related to trait accessibility. More specifically,*

H2a: Raters' level of extroversion is positively related to extroversion accessibility.

H2b: Raters' level of agreeableness is positively related to agreeableness accessibility.

H2c: Raters' level of neuroticism is positively related to neuroticism accessibility.

H2d: Raters' level of conscientiousness is positively related to conscientiousness accessibility.

H2e: Raters' level of openness to experience is positively related to openness to experience accessibility.

Chronic Accessibility and Trait Judgement Accuracy

The link between chronic accessibility and trait judgement accuracy. We may wonder why we are better at judging certain people's personality traits than others. It is suggested that we all have chronic accessibility traits on how we view people's behaviour. Therefore, higher chronic accessibility will tend to increase the likelihood that the accessible construct will be used in judging stimulus information (Higgins & Brendl, 1995). Moreover, memory research has demonstrated that self-referential processing is advantageous. In essence, when a rater judges a target, the rater will judge the target according to the target's traits based on the degree of trait similarity ("does it describe me?") (Funder, 1995).

The theory of chronic accessibility can be utilised in accordance with Funder's (2012) RAM. This is due to the notion that the trait under judgement may become salient, thus making the rater an expert in rating that particular trait (Higgins, 2000). As individuals are often forming judgements about others' personality (Funder, 2012), it is suggested that the schema of their dominant personality traits are located at the top of their storage bin (Wyer & Srull, 1989). For example, an introverted rater's schema of introversion should be at the top of their storage bin (Shen, 2004). Thus, the introversion schema will be activated when an introvert encounters introversion stimuli. In sum, chronic accessibility is posited to play a role in trait judgement accuracy.

Empirical research. Chronically accessible constructs are developed from frequent and consistent experience with a particular area of social behaviour, which enables these constructs to become more likely than other constructs to be used in interpreting social behaviour (Bargh, 1984; Higgins & King, 1981). Moreover, differences in individuals' sets of chronically accessible constructs could be due to individual's life history. Higgins et al. (1982) conducted a study to examine the role of individual differences in construct accessibility in the subjective impression and recall of others. The results of the study revealed that subjects deleted inaccessible trait-related information as opposed to accessible trait-related information, in their impressions and in their reproduction of target information. A study conducted by Srull and Wyer (1980), replicated Higgins et al.'s (1982) findings. In sum, both studies suggested that when stimulus information was related to a particular construct, then it is more likely to be included in the individual's judgements (Higgins et al., 1982; Srull & Wyer, 1980). The findings by Higgins et al. (1982) lead us to ask the question: if we are better at recalling certain people, why is that the case? Moreover, can chronic accessibility aid in answering this question? For example, does introverts' chronic accessibility make them better at judging introversion? Are they then better at detecting these cues? For example, is the level of the rater's introversion positively related to introversion accessibility, thus making it easier to detect and utilise introversion?

People often become absorbed in creating judgements of others' personality (Funder, 2012). Therefore, personality similarity can be regarded as the lens which enables raters to make inferences about targets who share the most accessible traits with

the rater. However, previous research has been limited in investigating the role of trait chronic accessibility in trait judgement accuracy. Thus, in accordance with the aim of this study, it was proposed that raters' salient personality traits would be more chronically accessible; thus in turn, facilitating the ratings of the targets' personalities.

In light of the argument offered above, we therefore expect a relationship between raters' level of accessibility for a trait and trait judgement accuracy:

> ***Hypotheses.*** *H3: Raters' trait accessibility is positively related to trait judgement accuracy. As such,*
>
> *H3a: Raters' level of extroversion accessibility is positively related to the accuracy of judging extroversion.*
>
> *H3b: Raters' level of agreeableness accessibility is positively related to the accuracy of judging agreeableness.*
>
> *H3c: Raters' level of conscientiousness accessibility is positively related to the accuracy of judging conscientiousness.*
>
> *H3d: Raters' level of neuroticism accessibility is positively related to the accuracy of judging neuroticism.*
>
> *H3e: Raters' level of openness to experience accessibility is positively related to the accuracy of judging openness to experience.*
>
> Given the argument outlined above, the effects of personality traits on accuracy would be partially mediated by chronic accessibility for the same trait:
>
> ***Hypothesis.*** *H4: The effect of raters' personality traits on trait judgement accuracy is partially mediated by chronic accessibility for the same trait.*

Method

In the method section, the research design employed in the present study is discussed. Then, the demographic information of our sample will be discussed. Next, we describe and discuss the development of the materials and measures employed in the present study. Thereafter, the procedure followed in our study will be outlined. Finally, we outline the data analysis followed in the present study.

Research Approach

We collected primary data from a convenience sample in a field setting. We followed a correlational approach and used a cross-sectional survey design. This design was used to collect quantitative data at one point in time. We chose this design, due to the cost and time efficiency. In addition, this design was better suited to address our research question, that is, to measure the strength of association between the variables in the present study (Burns & Burns, 2008). However, by choosing a correlational design, it was not possible to infer causality (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Participants

The target population was people who were employed in the financial services sector. A convenience sampling method was used. Earlier studies (e.g., Sait, 2014) used mostly students, thus resulting in low external validity. In order to enhance the external validity of the present study, we used actual employees (Burns & Burns, 2008). Although 551 participants attempted the questionnaire, data from 223 participants were included in the final analysis due to a number[2] of participants only partially completing the questionnaire.

In order to describe the characteristics of the research sample, we requested participants to fill in their gender, age, home language, race, marital status, highest level of education, current level of employment, work status, frequency of interview participation and frequency of completing performance appraisals.

[2] 328 participants' data were not included in the present data set as they failed to complete the full questionnaire.

The demographic details of participants in the present study are outlined in Table 1, below. Of these participants, 62.3% were female (n = 139), 35.4% of the participants (n = 79) were male and 2.2% (n = 5) did not specify their gender. The participants' ages in years ranged from 21 to 65 (M = 38.16; SD = 9.4). With regard to work status, 87.9% (n = 196) participants were employed full-time, whilst 9.9% (n = 22) were employed in terms of a fixed-term contract, and 2.2% (n = 5) did not specify their work status. In terms of marital status, 60.1% (n = 134) participants were married or engaging in co-habitation, 30.9% (n = 69) were single, 6.7% (n = 15) indicated other and 2.2% (n = 5) did not specify. Most of the participants (52.9%) indicated that English was their home language. English was also the official workplace language of the organisation. It was assumed that the participants often formed perceptions about candidates and their colleagues or line managers when providing feedback. Most of the participants (54.3%) often completed performance appraisals and a number (22%) often participated in interviews.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Demographic variable	*f*	Percentage (%)
Home language		
English	118	52.9
Afrikaans	74	33.2
Xhosa	15	6.7
Other	11	4.9
Did not specify	5	2.2
Race		
White	104	46.6
Coloured	62	27.8
Black	25	11.2
Indian	21	9.4
Did not specify	5	2.2
Prefer not to answer	5	2.2
Other	1	.4
Highest level of education		
Post-graduate degree	85	38.1
First degree or diploma	82	36.8
Grade 12 or matric	51	22.9
Did not specify	5	2.2
Current level of employment		
Junior management and staff	127	57
Middle management	63	28.3
Senior management	26	11.7
Did not specify	5	2.2
Top management	2	.9

Notes: N = 223

Materials

Description of the stimulus material. The present study will employ vignettes. The vignettes were extracted from Sait's (2014) study. The five vignettes each comprised a mock interview target, which served as a stimulus in encompassing BFI traits. In addition, strategic words such as "hardly", "always", "sometimes" and "often" were utilised in the vignettes to indicate the degree to which the target displayed a particular personality trait (Sait, 2014). An example of a vignette was:

> Person **A** is not really interested in others and shows little concern for others' problems. **A** also tends to insult people frequently. **A** doesn't particularly like structure and only sometimes does things according to plan. At work, **A** wouldn't necessarily be one to initiate conversations, but wouldn't bottle up feelings either. This person sometimes comes up with workable ideas for doing things better, although doesn't have a particularly good imagination. Person **A** is easily irritated and has frequent mood swings and often feels blue. **A** takes offence easily.

The vignettes served as targets, which participants had to rate each target according to the Big Five Inventory (BFI) traits (see Appendix A, section B).We presented participants with descriptions of the BFI traits, listing adjectives that described a person high and low on a trait. We then gave participants descriptions of five interview applicants in terms of their personalities on each of the traits which were previously described to them. We then requested participants to form an impression of each person's personality within the workplace context and asked them to indicate the level of personality trait exhibited by each person by using a 5-point Likert-type scale. The points on the scale ranged from 1 (low indication of trait) to 5 (strong indication of trait).

Development of the vignettes. We chose the vignettes employed in Sait's (2014) study, as the development of the vignettes were done according to experimental vignette methodology (EVM) best practices (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). EVM is regarded as a way to address the challenges facing experimental research, such as external validity. The major principles involved in EVM are to provide participants

with realistic scenarios which are carefully formulated to evaluate dependent variables, including intentions, attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, EVM enriches experimental realism and allows researchers to control and manipulate variables, thus increasing internal and external validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

The vignettes were formed by containing traits which empirically co-varied from the Big Five (Goldberg, Johnson, Eber, Hogan, Ashton, Cloninger, & Gough, 2006; Sait, 2014). The personality traits in the questionnaire were adjusted using the traits provided by Permack (2011). Therefore, we did not require targets to provide us with self-report measures of their personalities. The vignettes comprised neutral information with regard to age, attractiveness, race, etc.; thus, ensuring that the raters' judgements were not affected by the targets' age or other irrelevant factors (Letzring, 2010; Sheppard, Goffin, Lewis, & Olson, 2011; Sait, 2014).

A pilot study was conducted on the realism of the vignettes (Sait, 2014). The participants in the study were ten students from an Organisational Psychology master's class. With regard to the vignettes' realism, participants assessed the vignettes with a score of higher than 8 out of 10 (M = 8.8; SD = 1.22). Therefore, the high scores suggested that all vignettes could be included in the task (Sait, 2014). Moreover, three subject matter experts (SMEs) rated these vignettes on each of the big five dimensions to obtain the accuracy of true scores (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). In order to obtain the level of inter-rater reliability for the SMEs, two-way random interclass correlations (ICC) were used. The results of the analysis indicated an alpha of .92, suggesting a good inter-rate reliability score. Therefore, the average scores obtained from the SMEs for each vignette were then the 'true score' of the target's personality. Furthermore, these vignettes were chosen due to the satisfactory realism and inter-rater reliability illustrated in prior research (Sait, 2014).

Measures

Personality measure. Personality traits of interviewers served as the independent variables. We measured participants' personality with the BFI (John & Srivastava, 1999), which contained 44 items. We requested participants to indicate the degree of agreement on the statements on a 5-point Likert-type scale,

ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item was "Is relaxed, handles stress well." This scale was employed in the study, as prior research on the scale has shown satisfactory reliability ($\alpha > .70$), convergent validity and discriminant validity (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; Costa & McCrae, 1992; John, & Srivastava, 1999; Watson, Clark, & Harkness, 1994; Watson & Hubbard, 1996).

Description of chronic accessibility measure. We decided to assess chronic accessibility by using a measure developed by Higgins et al. (1982). In line with the study by Higgins et al. (1982), we also requested participants to list the traits of a type of person that they liked, disliked, frequently encountered, avoided and sought out. However, we requested participants to use at least three descriptions for each person (see Appendix A, section C).

Scoring. We used a variation of Higgins et al.'s (1982) scoring method. First, we exported participants' trait descriptors into an Excel spreadsheet. We then compiled a database of big five descriptor terms from empirical research (Goldberg, 1990; Hofstee, De Raad, & Goldberg, 1992; John, 1990; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). A master's student was recruited as an additional independent coder of the participants' trait descriptors. Next, the two independent coders studied the database to ensure that they understood the format.

To code the participants responses, we then we split the number of cases to code equally, by issuing rater one with 112 cases and rater two with 111 cases. Thereafter, for each trait descriptor, we did an electronic search on the database to identify trait descriptors according to the big five traits. Once we found a perfect match, we would code the participants' trait descriptors into the big five traits. Instances occurred where we could not find a perfect match, thus causing us to search for synonyms. Where the synonym search did not yield success, we had to consider the trait definition and discuss the trait with the fellow coder until interrater agreement was reached. For example, person Z used **beautiful** as a trait descriptor, we then agreed to code this descriptor as **agreeableness**.

After we had coded the participants' trait descriptors, we classified participants' either as 'chronics' or 'non-chronics'. Previous research (Higgins et al., 1982) deemed

a participant a ‘chronic’ on a particular trait if the trait descriptor was the first trait which came to mind when describing a target or based on the frequency of the prevalence of the trait across the participants’ descriptions of the target. In order to enhance the chronic accessibility measure, we decided to employ a different operationalisation, based on the frequency of the prevalence of the traits across the trait descriptions. Hence, participants who did not make reference to any of the BFI traits (no synonyms or antonyms) in their responses were classified as ‘non-chronics’. Participants who made references to any of the BFI traits (including synonyms) at least once across the five questions were classified as ‘chronics’. For example, we calculated a participant’s score based on the frequency of output score, which was done by counting the total number of construct-related responses on the BFI traits to all five questions and dividing this number by the number of all responses to those questions.

Overall, we coded 5 390 trait descriptors in total and the average number of trait descriptors given by each respondent was 21. The average number of trait descriptors for the agreeableness trait was ten, extroversion was four, conscientiousness was three, neuroticism was two and openness to experience was two.

Accuracy measure. Accuracy scores served as the dependent variable in the study. In line with previous studies (Balzer, Rohrbaugh, & Murphy, 1983; Funder & Colvin, 1997; Letzring, 2010; Michela, 1990; Sait 2014), we computed an accuracy score for each participant.

Participants’ accuracy scores were computed by determining within person–profile correlations (between the raters’ scores of targets’ personality traits and the true scores of the targets’ personalities, using the targets scores in the vignettes as ‘true scores’), at dimension level, with an *r* to Fisher’s *z*-transformation (Sait, 2014). We decided to use five hypothetical vignettes as stimuli to ascertain the ‘true scores’ of personality. A ‘true score’ can be defined as the representation of a mean of an infinite number of scores across parallel measures of a certain test (Allen & Yen, 1979).

In other words, we calculated the correlation between the raters’ scores of the targets’ personalities and the ‘true scores’ of the targets’ personalities (Sait, 2014). In order for us to ascertain the accuracy level, we compared the raters’ ratings to the

vignettes' ratings. To illustrate the technique, if person Z was rated with a score of 4/5 on conscientiousness, then a rater who rated person Z as a 5, would be regarded as having a high accuracy score in comparison to a different rater who rated person Z as a 2 (Sait, 2014). We chose this method, as it allowed us to determine the similarity between the raters' set of judgement scores and the target (Funder & Colvin, 1997).

Procedure and Data Collection

We requested ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town's Commerce Ethics in Research Committee before conducting the study. After we had been granted approval, we sent electronic questionnaires via email to all employees in the organisation. This method allowed participants to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. We disseminated the questionnaire to employees in July 2014 and the data collection was completed by August 2014.

We attached a cover letter to the questionnaire to explain the purpose of the study, namely to investigate the relationship between personality, trait accessibility and judgement accuracy (as part of a UCT Organisational Psychology master's study). We informed participants that participation was voluntary and confidential, that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, and that they could be assured of their anonymity. We then presented the questionnaire in English to the participants. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire was 20 minutes. Participants were incentivised to participate by telling them they could win a shopping voucher to the value of R500. We also requested participants to provide their email addresses, in order for the winner to be notified.

Statistical Analysis

We used the Statistical Packaging for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22, to conduct all statistical analyses. Before we performed the statistical analysis of the data, we conducted pre-analysis checks. We investigated the data capturing accuracy for the chronic accessibility measure, checked response patterns and completed tests of assumptions on the scales. This was performed to ensure that the data set was appropriate for statistical analysis (Burns & Burns, 2008).

We executed an examination on the validity, reliability and descriptive statistics for the scales used in the study. We decided to use Cronbach's (1951) co-efficient alpha to test the internal consistency of the scales. We then used exploratory factor analysis to examine the structure and dimensionality of the measures. We used a Pearson product-moment correlation and Spearman's rho to test the hypotheses.

Even though the conceptual framework for the variables of the study (see Figure 2) suggested that chronic accessibility was a mediator, we decided not to assess possible mediation effects, unless the necessary preliminary hypotheses tests (Baron & Kenny, 1986) supported this analysis.

Results

The results section commences with an examination of the reliability, validity and descriptive statistics of the data from our scale measures employed in this study. This is followed by the results of the hypotheses testing.

Screening Data

Pre-analysis checks. We conducted pre-analysis checks to ensure that the data set was suitable to use. We randomly checked the accuracy of the coding of all the survey responses as well as the responses of the chronic accessibility measure. We encountered no discrepancies in the coding of the responses. We then checked the data set for obvious response patterns and patterns of missing items. A total of 551 respondents participated in the questionnaire, yet data from 223 respondents were included in the final analysis, as 328 respondents partially completed the questionnaire.

Normality. We then conducted tests of assumptions on all the variable scores employed in the study. Normality, skewness and kurtosis were checked using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Significance tests were used to identify serious violation of all assumptions, for example, for the normality assumption, when p-values were greater than the predetermined critical value ($p > .05$), we accept the null hypothesis and classified the data as normally distributed (Burns & Burns, 2008). Although the Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests revealed that all variable scores were non-normally distributed, we found the source of non-normality to reside in significant outliers (discussed next). Linearity and homoscedasticity were inspected by using bivariate scatter plots. It emerged that there were no clear deviations from linearity, nor homoscedasticity.

Outliers. There was a concern of extreme values affecting the results, and a separate data file was devised with all the extreme values included ($3.29 < z < 3.29$; $p < .001$). We decided to use Aguinis, Gottfredson and Joo's (2013) best practices to treat the outliers appropriately. It emerged that extreme values were detected in the accuracy measures of personality, the chronic accessibility measures and the big five personality measures. We then removed 28 data points, as these points skewed the data set (i.e., 11

data points for the accuracy measure of personality, 16 data points for chronic accessibility measure and 1 data point for the big five measure; resulting in the removal of 4% of the overall measurement scores).

Measurement Properties

Reliability

In order to test the internal consistency of the Big Five personality subscales employed in this study, Cronbach's co-efficient alpha and item analysis were used. Cronbach alpha's of .70 and above are considered to show satisfactory internal consistency (Burns & Burns, 2008). Item–total correlations of .30 and above are regarded as adequate for statistical analyses (Burns & Burns, 2008). Table 2.1, below presents the big five subscale's alphas, minimum and maximum item–total correlations.

Table 2.1

Reliability Results for the Big Five Inventory Subscales

Statistics	E	A	N	C	O
Cronbach's α	.84	.75	.77	.82	.78
Corrected min item–total correlation	.41	.27	.39	.48	.45
Corrected max item–total correlation	.74	.56	.55	.63	.65

Note. $N = 223$. E = Extroversion (8 items), A = Agreeableness (9 items), N = Neuroticism (8 items), C = Conscientiousness (9 items), O = Openness to experience (6 items).

Big Five personality subscales. A test for internal reliability and an item analysis was conducted on each of the big five subscales. Inspection of the item–total correlations and Cronbach's α for the *Extroversion, Conscientiousness and Neuroticism* scales were found to be satisfactory; thus no items were deleted and all items on these scales were included in further analysis (see Table 2.2–Table 2.4, below).

Table 2.2

Item–total Statistics for the 8-item Extroversion Scale (α = .84)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 1	.651	.809
Item 6	.557	.822
Item 11	.412	.837
Item 16	.560	.822
Item 21	.741	.795
Item 26	.395	.840
Item 31	.612	.814
Item 36	.622	.813

N = 223

Table 2.3

Item–total Statistics for the 9-item Conscientiousness Scale (α = .82)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 3	.503	.799
Item 8	.480	.802
Item 13	.577	.794
Item 18	.536	.795
Item 23	.511	.797
Item 28	.488	.799
Item 33	.533	.797
Item 38	.626	.784
Item 43	.513	.798

N = 223

Table 2.4

Item–total Statistics for the 8-item Neuroticism Scale (α = .77)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 4	.427	.757
Item 9	.532	.741
Item 14	.553	.736
Item 19	.435	.758
Item 24	.458	.752
Item 29	.494	.746
Item 34	.392	.782
Item 39	.523	.740

N = 223

It emerged that one item on the *Agreeableness* scale (item 22) had an item–total correlation below .30 (*r* = .27) (see Table 2.5, below). We decided not to exclude this item from further analysis, as it emerged that the Cronbach α for this scale remained the same even when this item was deleted (see Table 2.6, below). In addition, the more measures there are of the construct and then there is a better overlap of prediction. Therefore, all items on this subscale were included in the analyses (see Table 2.6, below).

Table 2.5

Item–total Statistics for the 9-item Agreeableness Scale (α = .75)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 2	.445	.720
Item 7	.382	.730
Item 12	.396	.727
Item 17	.456	.717
Item 22	.269	.746
Item 27	.468	.717
Item 32	.563	.707
Item 37	.529	.703
Item 42	.347	.735

N = 223

Table 2.6

Item–total Statistics for the 8-item Agreeableness Scale (α = .75)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 2	.454	.718
Item 7	.373	.732
Item 12	.407	.726
Item 17	.443	.720
Item 27	.480	.715
Item 32	.526	.710
Item 37	.540	.699
Item 42	.347	.736

N = 223

An examination of the item–total correlations for the *Openness to Experience* scale indicated that four items (item 30, 35, 41 and 44) should be removed due to the items' low correlation with the scale ($r < .30$) (see Table 2.7, below). After conducting a repeat Cronbach α minus items: 30, 35, 41 and 44 (scale now comprised 6 items), Cronbach's α of .78 was produced, which is an acceptable reliability level for a scale (see Table 2.8, below). Therefore, items 30, 35, 41 and 44 were removed from further analysis (see Table 2.8, below).

Table 2.7

Item–total Statistics for the 10-item Openness to Experience Scale (α = .72)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 5	.488	.677
Item 10	.475	.682
Item 15	.485	.676
Item 20	.419	.687
Item 25	.635	.652
Item 30	.247	.713
Item 35	.294	.710
Item 40	.580	.663
Item 41	.028	.756
Item 44	.294	.711

N = 223

Table 2.8

Item–total Statistics for the 6-item Openness to Experience Scale (α = .78)

Item	Corrected item–total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
Item 5	.519	.754
Item 10	.450	.770
Item 15	.509	.757
Item 20	.457	.771
Item 25	.647	.721
Item 40	.624	.729

N = 223

Chronic accessibility measure. In order to ensure high inter-rater reliability between the coders; the coders had to code the first 15 cases containing 369 trait descriptors independently according to the list of adjectives. Thereafter, an agreement level of 97% was achieved. The coders then discussed the discrepancies and agreed on the coding of the discrepancies.

Validity

The satisfactory Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) (> .5) and the statistical significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .05$) indicated the appropriateness to conduct exploratory factor analysis on data obtained from the big five subscales (see Table 3.1). A principal component analysis extraction method was employed to determine the structure and dimensionality of these scales. In order to determine the factor structure, the Kaiser (1970) criterion was used. Therefore, factors with an eigenvalue of greater than one were deemed meaningful. Please see Table 3.1 (below) for the eigenvalues, percentage of variance explained by component, as well minimum and maximum factor loadings for all the scale scores.

The results from the PCA analyses revealed one component within the *Openness to Experience* scale (see Table 3.2 below). With the emergence of one component, the expected unidimensionality of the scale was confirmed. Two components emerged within the *Agreeableness, Extroversion, Conscientiousness* and *Neuroticism* scales. Due to the emergence of the multiple components, we could not

confirm expected unidimensionality of these scales (see Table 3.3, Table 3.4, Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 below). All items on the *Agreeableness, Extroversion, Conscientiousness* and *Neuroticism* scales loaded substantially ($r > .30$) onto the first component, whilst only two items (*Agreeableness)*, three items (*Extroversion*), two items (*Conscientiousness*) and three items (*Neuroticism*) loaded significantly onto the second component for these four subscales.

Table 3.1

Structure and Dimensionality for the Big Five Subscales

Scales	*KMO*	*Bartlett's test of sphericity*		*Eigenvalue of first component*	*% of variance explained by component*	*Min factor loading*	*Max factor loading*
		χ^2	*Df*				
E	.85	627.191*	28	3.79	47.41	.51	.83
A	.77	363.786*	36	3.06	34.00	.41	.71
N	.81	373,429*	28	3.13	39.17	.55	.69
C	.86	549.806*	36	3.83	42.53	.58	.74
O	.80	345.932*	21	2.81	48.56	.61	.79

Note. $N = 223$. E = Extroversion, A = Agreeableness, N =Neuroticism, C = Conscientiousness, O = Openness to Experience

* $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 3.2

Component Matrix for the 6-item Openness to Experience Scale

Item	Component
	1
Item 5	.692
Item 10	.610
Item 15	.673
Item 20	.616
Item 25	.794
Item 40	.775

N = 233

Table 3.3

Component Matrix for the 9-item Agreeableness Scale

Item	Components	
	1	2
Item 2	.588	-.363
Item 7	.531	.382
Item 12	.538	-.406
Item 17	.619	.188
Item 22	.411	.586
Item 27	.614	-.323
Item 32	.714	.293
Item 37	.679	-.286
Item 42	.493	.111

N = 223

Table 3.4

Component Matrix for the 8-item Extroversion Scale

Item	Components	
	1	2
Item 1	.762	-.226
Item 6	.680	-.408
Item 11	.527	.597
Item 16	.671	.474
Item 21	.834	-.251
Item 26	.510	.474
Item 31	.722	-.297
Item 36	.738	-.001

N = 223

Table 3.5

Component Matrix for the 9-item Conscientiousness Scale

Item	Components	
	1	2
Item 3	.650	-.525
Item 8	.581	.239
Item 13	.707	-.306
Item 18	.642	.447
Item 23	.627	-.022
Item 28	.631	-.311
Item 33	.665	-.075
Item 38	.738	.083
Item 43	.614	.538

N = 223

Table 3.6

Component Matrix for the 8-item Neuroticism Scale

Item	Components	
	1	2
Item 4	.561	-.448
Item 9	.684	.349
Item 14	.694	-.253
Item 19	.582	-.361
Item 24	.609	.324
Item 29	.640	-.236
Item 34	.551	.654
Item 39	.668	-.013

N = 223

Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations of the study variables are presented in Figure 3, Figure 4, Table 4 and Table 5, below. With regard to accurate personality detection, the participants found *Conscientiousness* easier to detect accurately than the other traits, whilst *Extroversion* was the hardest trait to detect accurately. With regard to chronic accessibility, *Agreeableness* was found to be the most chronically accessible trait, whilst *Openness to experience* was found to be the least chronically accessible trait.

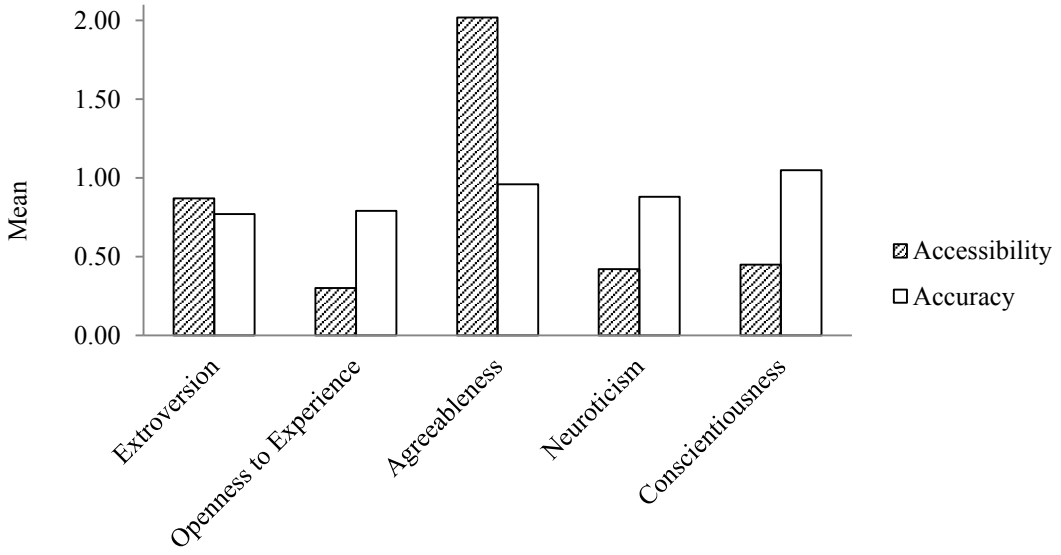

Figure 3. Mean scores for accessibility and accuracy by trait

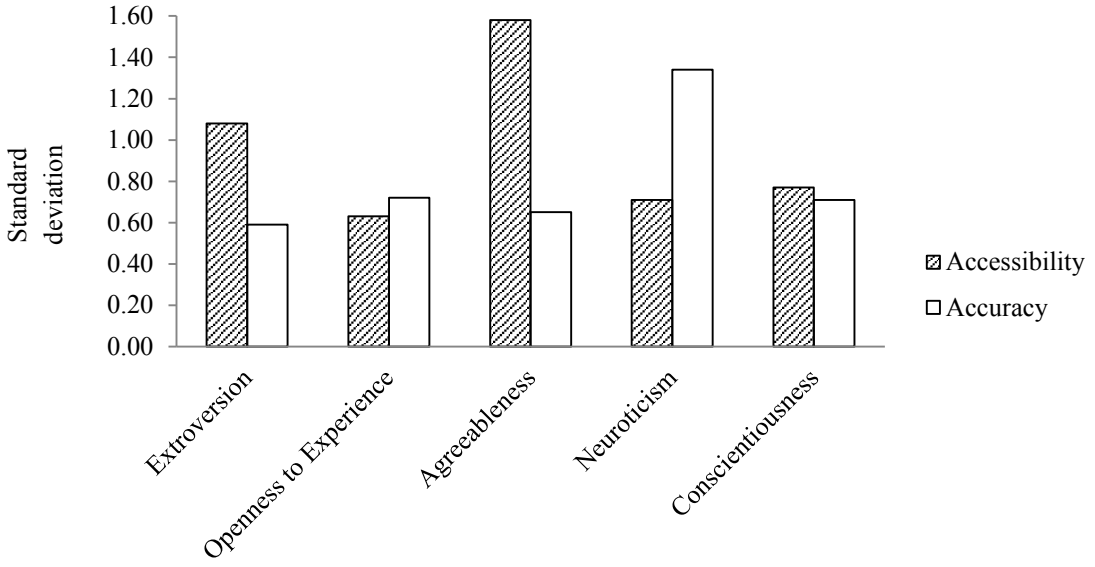

Figure 4. Standard deviation of accessibility and accuracy scores by trait.

Tests of Hypotheses

In order to ascertain whether a relationship existed between the variables in the study, the hypotheses as stated earlier were tested using a Pearson product-moment correlation (hypothesis 1) and a Spearman's rho (hypotheses 2 and 3). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test revealed that all but one variable (total accuracy scores) were non-normally distributed.[3] Therefore, hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using a Spearman's rho (Burns & Burns, 2008). Table 4 below summarises the Pearson correlation coefficients obtained. Table 5 below summarises the Spearman's rho correlation coefficients obtained. Cohen's (1988) guideline was utilised to interpret the correlation coefficients. Cohen's (1988) conventions for the correlation coefficients are as follows: .10 = small effect size, .30 = medium effect size and .50 = large effect size (irrespective of sign). We used .05 as a level of significance and did not find it necessary to adjust the significance level for familywise error rate (FWER), as the hypotheses were tested for each trait individually.

[3] Total accuracy scores were calculated by obtaining a correlation between judges' ratings of all targets on all dimensions, and the true-scores.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study Variables using Pearson product-moment correlation

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*
1. Gender[a]	1.64	.48	-																
2. Age	38.16	9.37	.00	-															
3. Agreeableness	3.95	.50	.26**	.11	-														
4. Extroversion	3.23	.68	.01	-.05	.07	-													
5. Conscientiousness	4.01	.52	.23**	.16	.44**	.17*	-												
6. Neuroticism	2.51	.58	.08	-.19**	-.48**	-.34**	-35**	-											
7. Openness to Experience	3.74	.53	-.21**	-.04	-.09	.28**	.07	-.16*	-										
8. Agreeableness CA[b]	2.02	1.58	.12	.11	.16*	.03	.15*	.01	-.13	-									
9. Extroversion CA[b]	.87	1.08	.20**	- .03	.00	-.01	.01	.06	.02	-.13	-								
10. Conscientiousness CA[b]	.45	.77	-.03	.07	.05	.06	.11	-.13	.03	-.15*	-.10	–							
11. Neuroticism CA[b]	.42	.71	.09	.10	.02	-.03	-.04	-.02	-.06	-.13	-.00	.06	–						
12. Openness to experience CA[b]	.30	.63	-.15**	.05	-.16*	.03	-.18**	-.01	.20**	-.08	-.03	.05	.10	–					
13. Agreeableness Acc[c]	.96	.65	.03	.13	-.02	-.00	.07	-.03	-.01	.10	.19**	.03	.15*	.04	–				
14. Extroversion Acc[c]	.77	.59	-.10	.05	-.10	.02	-.02	-.01	.11	.05	.21**	-.08	.13*	.04	.27**	–			
15. Conscientiousness Acc[c]	1.05	.71	.02	.00	-.11	-.09	.09	.07	.04	.18**	.10	-.07	.06	.01	.26**	.17*	–		
16. Neuroticism Acc[c]	.88	1.34	-.10	-.00	-.14*	.04	-.04	.03	.12	-.04	.14*	-.06	.07	-.03	.16*	.28**	.24**	–	
17. Openness to experience Acc[c]	.79	.72	-.08	.05	.02	.05	-.03	-.14*	.01	.04	.08	.04	.07	.17*	.18**	.19**	.20**	.17*	–

Note. N = 223.[a]Gender was coded such that men were 1 and women were 2. [b]Chronic accessibility was assessed using a variant of Higgins et al.'s (1982) method. [c]Accuracy scores were Fisher transformed (*r* to *z*) profile correlations between participants' ratings at item level and SME true scores. **p* < .05; ** *p* <.01 (two-tailed).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study Variables using Spearman's rho

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*
1. Gender[a]	1.64	.48	–																
2. Age	38.16	9.37	.01	–															
3. Agreeableness	3.95	.50	.26**	.12	–														
4. Extroversion	3.23	.68	.02	-.04	.03	–													
5. Conscientiousness	4.01	.52	.21**	.10	.46**	.16*	–												
6. Neuroticism	2.51	.58	.07	-.21**	-.47**	-.30**	-.37**	–											
7. Openness to experience	3.74	.53	-.18**	-.04	-.08	.28**	.07	-.15*	–										
8. Agreeableness CA[b]	2.02	1.58	.12	.12	.15*	.05	.12	.02	–.10	–									
9. Extroversion CA[b]	.87	1.08	.19**	- .01	.02	-.10	.02	.01	.04	-.04	–								
10. Conscientiousness CA[b]	.45	.77	-.06	.04	.07	.05	.08	-.13	.03	-.06	-.09	–							
11. Neuroticism CA[b]	.42	.71	.07	.11	.00	-.01	.05	-.05	-.02	-.11	.01	.06	–						
12. Openness to experience CA[b]	.30	.63	-.14*	.07	-.15*	.02	-.18**	-.02	.20**	-.05	.01	.10	.13	–					
13. Agreeableness Acc[c]	.96	.65	.03	.08	-.04	-.01	.05	.01	.02	.08	.15*	.06	.10	.05	–				
14. Extroversion Acc[c]	.77	.59	-.14*	.03	-.13	-.01	-.03	-.02	.11	.03	.21**	-.11	.11	.04	.20**	–			
15. Conscientiousness Acc[c]	1.05	.71	.04	.05	-.12	-.10	.08	.06	.06	.20**	.11	-.05	.05	.00	.22**	.10	–		
16. Neuroticism Acc[c]	.88	1.34	-.10	-.00	-.17	.02	-.04	.04	.11	-.04	.12	-.04	.08	-.03	.14*	.26**	.19**	–	
17. Openness to experience Acc[c]	.79	.72	-.07	.05	.02	.04	-.04	-.15*	.04	.04	.10	.06	.04	.20**	.14*	.18**	.20**	.17*	–

Note. N = 223.[a]Gender was coded such that men were 1 and women were 2. [b]Chronic accessibility was assessed using a variant of Higgins et al.'s (1982) method.
[c]Accuracy scores were Fisher transformed (*r* to *z*) profile correlations between participants' ratings at item level and SME true scores. **p* < .05; ** *p* <.01 (two-tailed).

Personality traits and trait judgement accuracy. Hypothesis 1 stated that raters' personality traits are positively related to trait judgement accuracy.

Hypothesis 1a anticipated that raters' level of *Extroversion* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Extroversion*. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed that the relationship between the components were non-significant, showing a trivial to no effect size (r = .02, p = .80), thus, suggesting no support for hypothesis 1a; therefore, raters with high scores on *Extroversion* did not judge *Extroversion* more accurately than raters with low scores on *Extroversion*.

Hypothesis 1b posited that the raters' level of *Agreeableness* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Agreeableness*. A Pearson product-moment correlation yielded an insignificant relationship, showing a trivial effect size (r = -.02, p = .82). This result did not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1c suggested that raters' level of *Neuroticism* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Neuroticism*. The results indicated that these two components were generally unrelated, showing a trivial effect size (r = .03, p = .65); hence, there is no support for this hypothesis. Raters with high scores on *Neuroticism* therefore did not judge *Neuroticism* more accurately than raters with low scores on *Neuroticism*.

Hypothesis 1d expected that raters' level of *Conscientiousness* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Conscientiousness*. The results showed that these components were not significantly correlated, with a negligible effect size (r = .09, p = .21), indicating no support for the hypothesis. Raters with high scores on *Conscientiousness* therefore did not judge *Conscientiousness* more accurately than raters with low scores on *Conscientiousness*.

Hypothesis 1e anticipated that raters' level of *Openness to experience* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Openness to experience*. A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed an insignificant relationship between these two components, with an insignificant effect size (r = .01, p = .91). There was therefore no support for this hypothesis; thus, raters with high scores on *Openness to*

experience were not more accurate at detecting *Openness to experience* than raters with low scores on *Openness to Experience*.

Personality traits and trait accessibility. Hypothesis 2 proposed that raters' personality traits are positively related to trait accessibility.

Hypothesis 2a proposed that raters' level of *Extroversion* is positively related to *Extroversion accessibility*. A Spearman's rho analysis indicated that these two components were not statistically significantly related (see Table 5), but showed a small effect size between these components (r = -.10, p = .12); thus, indicating no support for hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b anticipated that raters' level of *Agreeableness* would be positively related to *Agreeableness accessibility*. A Spearman's rho correlation yielded (see Table 5) a negative significant relationship between *Agreeableness* and *Agreeableness accessibility*, with a small effect size between the variables (r = .15, p < .05); thus, hypothesis 2b was supported. This finding suggested that agreeable raters showed higher *Agreeableness accessibility* than raters who are not agreeable.

Hypothesis 2c posited that raters' level of *Neuroticism* would be positively related to *Neuroticism accessibility*. The results showed (see Table 5) a trivial effect size between the two components; thus, the components were generally unrelated (r = -.05, p = .42), indicating no support for hypothesis 2c.

Hypothesis 2d expected that raters' level of *Conscientiousness* would be positively related to *Conscientiousness accessibility*. A Spearman's rho analysis suggested (see Table 5) that a non-significant relationship existed between *Conscientiousness* and *Conscientiousness accessibility*, with a negligible effect size (r = .08, p = .26); thus, Hypothesis 2d was not supported. Therefore conscientious raters did not show higher *Conscientious accessibility*.

Hypothesis 2e proposed that raters' level of *Openness to experience* would be positively related to *Openness to experience accessibility*. The results indicated (see Table 5) that the hypothesis was supported and reveals that a significant positive relationship existed between these two components, with a small-to-medium effect size

(r = .20, p < .01). This finding suggests that raters who scored high on *Openness to experience* were more likely to show *Openness to experience* as an accessible trait.

Trait accessibility and trait judgement accuracy. Hypothesis 3 posited that raters' trait accessibility would be positively related to trait judgement accuracy.

Hypothesis 3a suggested that raters' level of *Extroversion accessibility* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Extroversion*. A Spearman's rho analysis indicated (see Table 5) that the relationship between the components was significant, with a small effect size (r = .21, p < .01); thus, indicating support for hypothesis 3a. This finding suggests that raters' who regarded *Extroversion* as accessible were more accurate in judging *Extroversion* than raters who did not have *Extroversion* as accessible.

Hypothesis 3b stated that raters' level of *Agreeableness accessibility* is positively related to the accuracy of judging *Agreeableness*. The Spearman's rho correlation yielded (see Table 5) an insignificant relationship between *Agreeableness* and accuracy of judging *Agreeableness*, with an insignificant effect size (r = .08, p = .23); hence, there was no support for this hypothesis. Raters, who might have regarded *Agreeableness* as accessible, did not judge *Agreeableness* more accurately than raters who did not consider *Agreeableness* accessible.

Hypothesis 3c expected that raters' level of *Neuroticism accessibility* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Neuroticism*. The results illustrated that (see Table 5) these two components were generally unrelated, with a trivial effect size (r = .08, p = .27), indicating no support for hypothesis 3c. Raters for whom *Neuroticism* was accessible, did not judge *Neuroticism* more accurately than raters for whom *Neuroticism* was not accessible.

Hypothesis 3d proposed that raters' level of *Conscientiousness accessibility* would be positively related to the accuracy of judging *Conscientiousness*. A Spearman's rho analysis indicated (see Table 5) that the relationship between the components was insignificant, with a trivial effect size (r = -.05, p = .49); thus, indicating no support for hypothesis 3d.

Hypothesis 3e stated that raters' level of *Openness to experience accessibility* is positively related to the accuracy of judging *Openness to experience*. The results (see Table 5) indicated support for this hypothesis and revealed that a significant positive relationship existed between these two components, with a small-to-medium effect size ($r = .20$ $p < .01$). Raters' who regarded *Openness to experience* as an accessible trait were more accurate in judging *Openness to experience*.

The results from the hypotheses testing revealed that four hypotheses were supported (weak), whilst eleven hypotheses were not supported (no) (see Figure 5, below).

Hypothesis 4 proposed that the effect of raters' personality traits on trait judgement accuracy is partially mediated by chronic accessibility. This hypothesis was not tested, as main effects were not significant (Burns & Burns, 2008).

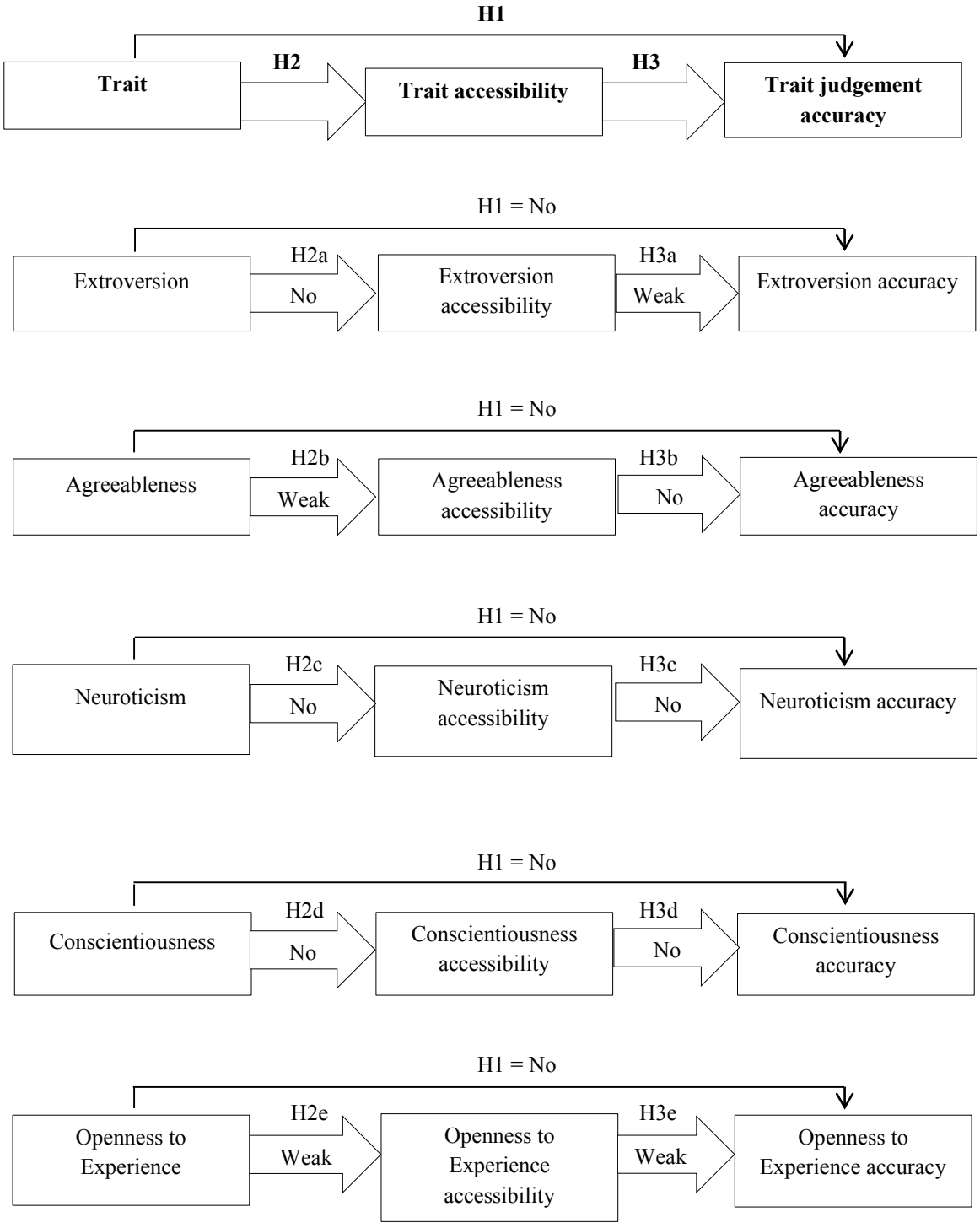

Figure 5. Summary diagram of hypotheses testing.

Discussion

In the first part of the discussion section, we will discuss the main conclusions of our study. Thereafter, the limitations of our study will be shared and recommendations will be suggested for future research on the area of study. Next, we will examine the theoretical and practical implications of our results. Finally, our research report will be concluded.

Main Findings

The present study hypothesised that raters' personality traits and trait accessibility are related to judgement accuracy. By examining raters' traits and trait accessibility, we were able to determine whether these constructs play a role in judgement accuracy. Research indicated that when the rater shares similar demographic variables such as gender and ethnicity to the target, then the rating accuracy will be enhanced (Letzring 2010). We found that this is not necessarily the case for personality similarity between raters and targets. As such, we replicated results of earlier studies conducted in a laboratory setting (e.g., Sait, 2014) within a field setting with actual employees.

The present study integrated aspects of Funder's (1995) Realistic Accuracy Model (RAM) and the concept of chronic accessibility (Higgins et al., 1982) as a foundation for our research. For some of the traits that we considered, results showed that when people are encountered with stimuli, then they may draw upon information in their perceptual storage bin to interpret the stimuli (Shen, 2004). However, this effect was not observed for all traits. However, we found that only certain personality traits were related to trait accessibility.

However, we found enough evidence to suggest that chronic accessibility may be a potential contributing mechanism for accurate judgements. The results of the present study showed that accessibility for certain traits predicted accuracy for the same traits. Although prior studies (e.g., Sait, 2014) suggested the possible role of trait accessibility in judgement accuracy, to our knowledge, the current study is the first to test it empirically. In doing so, the study contributes to the current understanding of the

individual difference factors which may contribute to judgement accuracy. However, as the effect was not consistent across all the traits, chronic accessibility might not facilitate cue detection and utilisation in all cases (Sait, 2014). Future studies should explore why this may the case.

Our first main finding revealed that rating a trait accurately is not determined by the rater's score on that particular trait. Hence, there is no relationship between rater-target personality trait similarity and accuracy of judging corresponding traits. In line with previous research (e.g., Lippa & Dietz, 2000), we found that certain personality traits were generally unrelated to judgment accuracy. As illustrated in our study, there was no significant relationship found between raters' level of agreeableness and the accuracy of judging agreeableness. However, we found that raters with low scores on agreeableness were slightly better at detecting agreeableness than raters with high scores on agreeableness. This is an intriguing finding; as it is agreeableness is associated with fewer observable cues than a trait like extroversion (Funder & Sneed, 1993). However, raters who had low scores of agreeableness might have utilised the cues in the vignettes to detect agreeableness differently. Furthermore, this speculation links to Funder's (1995) RAM, which suggests that accuracy, in part, is due to raters' ability to utilise the cues provided to them accurately. Therefore, it is possible that cue detection and utilisation might not be mediated by rater–target personality similarities.

Our study suggested that extroverts do not necessarily rate extroversion more accurately than introverts do. This finding of the present study is in line with research which suggested that sociable individuals tended to judge personalities less accurately (Ambady et al., 1995). Extroversion can be regarded as an easy measurable trait, as the descriptors include being talkative, outgoing, etc. (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Moreover, extroverts may tend to vocalise their feelings, opinions and thoughts, at the expense of paying attention to the behaviour of others. This may possibly affect their internal thought process and, in consequence, their judgemental accuracy (Mill, Allik, Realo, & Valk, 2009).

Our results showed that traits were not equally accurately judged. A possible explanation for this finding could lie in the descriptors of the trait in the vignettes. The

descriptors in the vignette were more reflective of the target's behaviour than of the target's emotional state. It is suggested that rating accuracy will be enhanced when a target's emotional state is rated (Ambady et al., 1995). This explanation may explain why conscientiousness was not rated accurately in our study. According to Sait (2014), there might be more suitable better cues to utilise in vignettes to enhance the judgement accuracy of conscientiousness. Accordingly, the target stimulus in the study might not have provided sufficient cues, thus affecting the rater's accuracy of conscientiousness judgements (Sait, 2014).

While we expected that judges would be more accurate at rating traits they share with targets, because of enhanced cue detection and utilisation, this was not the case in the present study. In doing so, the results of the present study agrees with previous research (Borkenau & Liebler, 1993; Funder & Dobroth, 1987), which posited that neuroticism and openness to experience are the most difficult personality traits to judge. We found no support for the accurate judgement of these traits. This could be due to the few behavioural cues associated with these traits in the vignette descriptions (Funder & Sneed, 1993; Sait, 2014). The insignificant relationship between neuroticism, openness to experience and judgement accuracy could be ascribed to the fact that more exposure time is required when rating neuroticism and openness to experience (Carney et al., 2007). It is suggested that we should provide raters with more exposure time to the target when they need to rate neuroticism and openness to experience (Sait, 2014).

An alternative explanation for the role of rater–target similarity on accuracy is that when raters perceive targets as similar to themselves then they might project their own personalities onto the targets. It is suggested that raters who engage in projection might accomplish judgement accuracy, but only if they have similar personalities to the targets. Therefore, rates should use projection only when they have a sufficiently high level of similarity to the target. Furthermore, raters who can make this distinction might be more accurate in rating similar and dissimilar targets than raters who cannot make this distinction (Vogt & Colvin, 2003).

Our second important finding relates to the relationship between the rater's personality and trait accessibility. We found that certain personality traits such as agreeableness and openness to experience were related to trait accessibility—raters high on these traits also tended to perceive others in terms of them. On the other hand, we could not prove that a relationship existed between the rater's level of extroversion, neuroticism and conscientious traits and trait accessibility. The findings of the present study revealed that raters who regarded themselves as introverts were more likely to regard extroversion an accessible trait than extroverts. Hence, there was no significant relationship found between raters' level of extroversion and extroversion accessibility. Furthermore, we also found no significant relationship between raters' level of neuroticism and neuroticism accessibility. It is speculated that these results may be attributed to the raters' interpretation of the degree of similarity between the stimulus information and the rater ("does it describe me") (Bower & Gilligan, 1979; Chandler et al., 2009; Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977).

Our third main finding is that accessibility may be attributed to the judge's personality, more likely for certain personality traits such as Extraversion and Openness. The judge's own personality may become salient when rating others, thus making the rater an 'expert' in that particular trait (Higgins, 2000). Given the findings of the present study, it can be argued that participating raters who deemed extroversion and openness to experience as accessible traits, were more likely to rate these respective traits accurately. Previous research suggested that the more frequently a construct is activated, the more likely it will be that the construct will be used to interpret information (Srull & Wyer, 1980). Therefore, the participating raters might have encountered relevant stimuli frequently; thus, resulting in extroversion and openness to experience traits to be located at the top of their storage bin. Accordingly, the raters in our study were presented with stimuli information and they might have drawn upon their chronically accessibility schema of extroversion and openness to experience to form a judgement.

In order to make sense of our findings, we might consider individual differences in chronic accessibility and how it may develop. It has been suggested that the frequency of activating certain stimuli could account for the effects of individual

differences in construct accessibility (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Higgins et al., 1982). Individuals will also vary regarding which constructs become activated in their perceptual 'storage bin'. This could be due to their life experiences and repertoires of chronically accessible constructs will differ accordingly. Thus, people's social experiences influence which constructs are activated frequently (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Higgins et al., 1982).

Research by Higgins et al. (1982) demonstrated the influence of chronically accessibility in person perception. They found that more accessible trait information than inaccessible trait information was included in individuals' impressions of the stimulus person. Their results suggested that it is possible for people to have the same constructs, but these differ according to the readiness with which the construct is used to process information. This suggestion points to the differences in construct accessibility, which ties in with our results. Thus, raters might have the same traits stored in their memory, but they can differ in using the construct to interpret information (Higgins et al., 1982; Srull & Wyer, 1980).

Limitations and Future Research

A few limitations emerged from our study. Firstly, care should be taken with regard to generalising the results of our study. We employed a non-probability judgement sampling method. All the participants in our study were employed at the same organisation; therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the greater population of other industries. The results only allow inferences to be made about the study's sample, which might have resulted in low external validity. As a result of cost and time constrictions, we could not use random sampling. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies focus on using a random sampling method to enhance the external validity and to permit the generalisability of the results to other industries (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Our study relied on data from employees at the same organisation. Despite this limitation, the population of working professionals enhanced the realism of our research as previous research (e.g., Sait, 2014) employed university students as participants and therefore could not generalise the results to working professionals. Hence, future

research could focus on recruiting working professionals who frequently engage in ratings of interviews and performance appraisals to enhance the results of their study.

Another limitation which emerged in the study is mono-method bias. Mono-method bias proposes that due to only a single method of measurement, minimal evidence exists that the variable is actually being measured. In essence, the variable is not being fully measured, thus only a part of the variable is being measured (Trochim, 2008). Mono-method bias may explain why most of relationships between the raters' trait level of chronic accessibility and trait accuracy were insignificant. A single method of measurement was employed to determine whether the rater's personality affects traits which they deem chronically accessible, which affects their ability to accurately judge that same trait. As a result, the chronic accessibility method of measurement might not have yielded sufficient evidence that chronic accessibility was being assessed. We urge future research to employ more than one method of measurement, to avoid mono-method bias.

In the present study, the applicant vignettes acted as the target stimuli for raters to judge targets. Although we strived to incorporate sufficient information for judgement in the vignettes, it is suggested that this still might not have provided the raters with sufficient cues for accurate judgement (Sait, 2014). The quality of the vignettes and the participants' exposure time to the vignettes might have affected our accuracy results on some of the dimensions. Certain dimensions such as openness to experience and neuroticism might necessitate more exposure time in order to obtain the same level of accuracy as the other dimensions (Carney et al., 2007). Therefore, it is suggested that future research ameliorate this potential limitation by using other stimulus material and exposing participants to longer and more frequent interactions with the stimulus.

Finally, the validity of the personality scale measures that we used may have been affected by possible multidimensionality of some of the trait measures identified in our exploratory factor analysis. We chose to make the assumption that the primary dimension extracted from the item scores (as judged by the eigen values and proportion of variance explained) in each scale was a suitable representation of the underlying

construct. This view was supported by generally acceptable internal consistencies and analysis of factor loadings. However, additional components that emerged from the personality item scores may also be explored as predictors of accuracy in future studies.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The present study addressed a theoretical gap in literature in the personnel selection and assessment field. Few studies have empirically investigated the relationship between raters' personality traits, trait accessibility and judgement accuracy in an organisational setting. Despite limited support for the study's hypotheses, the results may enhance our understanding of the role of raters' personality traits and trait accessibility in judgement accuracy, even if the conclusion is that these constructs play a relatively limited role in rating outcomes.

We demonstrated that, when a rater and target are similar on a particular trait, then this does not necessarily lead to the accurate judgement of that trait. Research conducted by Letzring (2010) reports that cue detection and utilisation might be mediated by rater–target demographic similarities. This suggests that when a rater and target are similar on demographic variables, then rating accuracy would be enhanced. However, we found that this is not necessarily the case for personality similarity. Therefore, cue detection and utilisation might not be enhanced by rater–target personality similarities.

The study also contributed to the trait accessibility literature by testing the relationship between raters' personality traits and trait accessibility. Specifically, previous research has posited that when a rater encounters stimulus information, then that rater is likely to interpret the information on the basis of the degree of similarity between the stimuli and him- or herself (Funder, 1995). We showed that certain personality traits, such as agreeableness and openness to experience, were chronically accessible traits for the participating raters. Therefore, our research provides partial support for the 'storage bin concept'.

Our results might be of particular relevance to human resource staffing, as the results provided insights into the factors which facilitate raters' rating accuracy and the

way we can use this information to select and train raters. Personality ratings in the workplace are important, as these ratings often underlie interview ratings (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Therefore it is important to select and train raters accordingly, as inaccurately judging and appointing candidates may contribute to employee turnover. Moreover, some of the costs associated with high turnover levels include recruitment and selection cost, a decrease in the level of productivity for employees who are covering a vacant role, and diminished productivity of employees who are training the appointed candidate (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2006).

Conclusion

We conducted this study in a field setting to examine the personality-related factors which may play a role in judgement accuracy. In light of the theoretical underpinnings, we found that scoring highly on a particular trait or having a trait as chronically accessibly, did not necessarily lead to accurate judgement of the same trait. This research may assist organisations to recruit, train and develop raters accordingly and to reap the rewards associated with accurate judgements. Thus, we hope that our study will inspire further research on factors which facilitate accurate trait judgements.

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Appendix A

Survey questionnaire

UCT ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTERS PROGRAMME
2014 DISSERTATION

Personality Judgements in Interviews

Did you know that interviews can be very useful methods to form judgements about others' personality?

Study Topic

In interviews, one of the most common judgements we form about applicants, are those about their personality. These judgements have important consequences, for example hiring an office professional whom the interviewer rates as reliable, but turns out to be unreliable. We are investigating the relationship between personality, trait accessibility and judgement accuracy (as part of a UCT Organisational Psychology Masters' study).

Instructions

Along with this letter, you will find a short questionnaire. If you choose to complete it, do so, and click the submit button at the end of the questionnaire. It should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. By participating, **two lucky respondents will stand a chance to each win a R500 gift voucher for Tygervalley Mall.** In order to be considered for the prize, you will need to provide your email address. Please note that your contact details will only be used for the purpose of the lucky draw and will not be linked to your responses to the questionnaire.

Research Ethics

We do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey. We guarantee that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your responses will not be identified with you personally as you are not required to identify yourself on the questionnaire. However, in order for us to contact the winner of the gift voucher, please provide your e-mail address in the space provided. None of the researchers are being financially rewarded for conducting this research. Please feel free to withdraw from the study at any time. As previous research has demonstrated that personal characteristics are essential variables to consider when analysing results, demographic information is requested at the end of the questionnaire.

Rights and Consent

Your participation is completely voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. By completing and submitting this questionnaire, you are acknowledging that your participation in this study has been of your own free will.

Contact

Should you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or the research study, you may contact Zubeida Gierdien at grdzub002@myuct.ac.za. The Commerce Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town has approved this study and the questionnaire.

Section A: Personality Inventory

Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements by selecting a number from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

I see myself as someone who:	**Strongly Disagree (1)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Neutral (3)**	**Agree (4)**	**Strongly Agree (5)**
1. is talkative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. tends to find fault with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. does a thorough job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. is depressed, blue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. is original, comes up with new ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. is reserved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. is helpful and unselfish with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. can be somewhat careless	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. is relaxed, handles stress well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. is curious about many different things	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. is full of energy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. starts quarrels with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. is a reliable worker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. can be tense	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. is ingenious, a deep thinker	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. generates a lot of enthusiasm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. has a forgiving nature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. tends to be disorganized	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. worries a lot	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. has an active imagination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. tends to be quiet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. is generally trusting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. tends to be lazy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. is emotionally stable, not easily upset	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. is inventive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. has an assertive personality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. can be cold and aloof	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. perseveres until the task is finished	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. can be moody	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. values artistic, aesthetic experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. is sometimes shy, inhibited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. is considerate and kind to almost everyone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. does things efficiently	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. remains calm in tense situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. prefers work that is routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. is outgoing, sociable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. is sometimes rude to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. makes plans and follows through with them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. gets nervous easily	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. likes to reflect, play with ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. has few artistic interests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. likes to cooperate with others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. is easily distracted	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. is sophisticated in art, music, or literature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section B: 'Reading' Applicants' Personalities

Listed below are descriptions of five personality traits. Each description lists adjectives that describe people high and low on the trait. Please read each description carefully. You will use these descriptions in a subsequent rating activity.

	Behaviour Description	
Trait	***High (+)***	***Low (-)***
1. Agreeable	Altruistic Humble Trust people	Sceptical Does not get involved with the problems of others
2. Conscientious	Strong willed Determined Well-organised	Procrastinate Unreliable Not very methodical
3. Extroversion	Likes people Active Warm	Reserved Independent Low need for thrills
4. Open to experience	Open to new experiences Curious Imaginative Appreciate art and beauty	Find change difficult Prefer to stick with the tried and true
5. Neurotic	Anxious Hostile Self-conscious Sad	Calm Even-tempered Handle themselves well in stressful situations

Instructions

Next, we describe five interview applicants in terms of their personalities on each of the traits that were just described to you. Try your best to form an impression of each person's personality within the workplace context. Please indicate the level of personality trait exhibited by each person by selecting a number from 1 to 5 (1 = low indication of trait; 5 = strong indication of trait). You may refer to the personality descriptions listed earlier.

Person A

Person **A** is not really interested in others and shows little concern for others' problems. **A** also tends to insult people frequently. **A** doesn't particularly like structure and only sometimes does things according to plan. At work, **A** wouldn't necessarily be one to initiate conversations, but wouldn't bottle up feelings either. This person sometimes comes up with workable ideas for doing things better, although doesn't have a particularly good imagination. Person **A** is easily irritated and has frequent mood swings and often feels blue. **A** takes offence easily.

Please rate Person A on each trait by making a selection in the appropriate circle:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Agreeableness					
2. Conscientiousness					
3. Extroversion					
4. Openness to Experience					
5. Neuroticism					

Person B

Person **B** is described by colleagues as one with a soft heart and always makes time for others. **B** always makes others feel at ease and shows empathy. **B** is not really interested in abstract ideas or spending too much time reflecting on issues. This person doesn't mind reading if the material is not too complex. **B** is relaxed most of the time and seldom gets upset. **B** doesn't mind talking to strangers, but doesn't enjoy being the centre of attention. **B** completes chores timeously and follows a schedule most of the time.

Please rate Person B on each trait by making a selection in the appropriate circle:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Agreeableness					
2. Conscientiousness					
3. Extroversion					
4. Openness to Experience					
5. Neuroticism					

Person C

At work, **C** is particularly detail oriented and always strives for perfection. **C** loves order and regularity. Although **C** is able to relax easily, **C** occasionally worries about things. **C** enjoys being around others and engaging in conversation. However, **C** isn't necessarily comfortable amongst strangers and avoids excessive attention. **C** is considerate of others' feelings and shows empathy. This person is good at many things. **C** doesn't particularly enjoy abstract conversations.

Please rate Person C on each trait by making a selection in the appropriate circle:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Agreeableness					
2. Conscientiousness					
3. Extroversion					
4. Openness to Experience					
5. Neuroticism					

Person D

Whilst at work, Person **D** pays attention to detail, when the task at hand requires it, but is also forgetful at times. **D** has a broad vocabulary and often has good ideas. **D** is described by colleagues as the life of the party. This individual makes friends easily and knows how to captivate others. **D** is not easily bothered by things, calm and has stable moods. This person is interested in people, although doesn't delve too deeply into others' lives.

Please rate Person D on each trait by making a selection in the appropriate circle:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Agreeableness					
2. Conscientiousness					
3. Extroversion					
4. Openness to Experience					
5. Neuroticism					

Person E

Person **E** is usually prepared and follows a schedule most of the time. **E** is skilled in handling social situations and is mindful to keep personal issues private. Person **E** spends lots of time reflecting on issues and can handle large amounts of information. This person has excellent ideas, latches onto things quickly and loves to read challenging material. **E** hardly takes offence and is not easily bothered by things. This person refrains from probing too much into the personal issues of others.

Please rate Person E on each trait by making a selection in the appropriate circle:

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Agreeableness					
2. Conscientiousness					
3. Extroversion					
4. Openness to Experience					
5. Neuroticism					

Section C: People that You Know

On this page describe five typical persons, using as many characteristics as you like to describe them. Use at least three word descriptions for each person.

First, describe a person that you **liked:**

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

Next, describe a person that you **disliked:**

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

Next, describe a person that you frequently **encountered:**

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

A type of person that you **avoided:**

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

A type of person that you **sought out** (in other words, you looked for their company):

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

…… …… ……

Section D: Demographic Information

Finally, we need more information about you to allow us to describe our research sample characteristics (in our research paper).

1. **Gender**
   - ❑ Male
   - ❑ Female

2. **Age (in years)**

3. **Home language**
   - ❑ Afrikaans
   - ❑ English
   - ❑ Xhosa
   - ❑ Other, please specify _____

4. **Race (for statistical purposes)**
   - ❑ Black
   - ❑ Chinese
   - ❑ Colored
   - ❑ Indian
   - ❑ White
   - ❑ Other
   - ❑ Prefer not to answer

5. **Marital status**

- ❑ Single
- ❑ Married/Co-habitation
- ❑ Other

6. **Highest level of education**

- ❑ Grade 12 or matric
- ❑ First degree or diploma
- ❑ Postgraduate degree

7. **Current level of employment**

- ❑ Top Management
- ❑ Senior Management
- ❑ Middle Management
- ❑ Junior Management

8. **Work Status**

- ❑ Full Time Employment
- ❑ Fixed-Term Contract

9. **How often do you participate in interviews**

- ❑ Often
- ❑ Seldom
- ❑ Never

10. **How often do you complete performance appraisals**

- ❑ Often
- ❑ Seldom

- ❑ Never

11. Email Address (disclosing your email address is voluntary, if you want to be eligible for the study incentive (voucher):

_____

Conclusion

You have come to the end of the questionnaire. Please ensure that you have completed all the questions.

Thank you!

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Zubeida Gierdien: grdzub002@myuct.ac.za