

# **Development of the Diversity Vigilance and Engagement Test**

## **Executive Summary**

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Directed by Dr. Daniel P. McDonald, Director of Research

Summer 2010

Technical Report (Exec Summary) # 10-10

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

There are two primary assessment strategies in the area of diversity, attitudinal scales and assessment of cultural competencies. Recently developed attitudinal scales in the area of diversity include “White Privilege Attitudes Scale” (Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman, 2009) and the “Psychosocial Costs of Racism to Whites Scale” (Sifford, Ng, & Wong, 2009). Attitudinal measures assess cognitions, emotions, and behavioral intentions regarding social privilege. There are two problems with such attitudinal measures. First, a critical aspect of social privilege is that the beneficiaries are typically unaware of the afforded privileges. As such, attitudinal measures ask individuals to rate emotional and behavioral intentions regarding issues for which they have not likely formed the pre-requisite cognitions. Second, the attitudinal approach requires assessment instruments be targeted to specific demographic groups, i.e., the above scales only have meaning for White respondents.

Assessments of cultural competencies focus on knowledge about other cultures, and the ability to apply this knowledge when interacting with members of that culture. Cultural competency assessments typically are used in conjunction with cross-cultural training programs, such as training military personnel for deployment in foreign countries. The limitations of cultural competency assessments include that they are best suited for foreign cultures and different assessments are required for each culture, if knowledge about another culture is included in the assessment.

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### **Development of Diversity Situational Judgment Test**

The purpose of the current research was to develop a diversity assessment relevant to race-related social issues in the U.S., and to design the assessment in such a manner that it was not tailored to a specific culture nor limited to use with only White respondents. To this end, I developed the race version of the Diversity Vigilance and Engagement Test (DiVET). The DiVET is a situational judgment test (SJT). The ‘items’ on SJTs are scenarios in which respondents are asked to imagine they find themselves. Each scenario is accompanied with a set of possible hypothetical responses to the scenario. The respondent either chooses the response he/she is most likely to do (and sometimes not do) or rates each response option on how likely he/she is to behave in that manner. SJTs have been used successfully to evaluate training evaluation at DEOMI (Hauenstein, Findlay, & McDonald, 2010).

There are two parts to the DiVET. Part 1 (28 scenarios) is designed to assess the likelihood that an individual will engage situations that reflect rationalizations of social privilege. Each item on the DiVET is based on a typical race-related social issue, e.g., Affirmative Action in an employment setting. There are four response options to each scenario and each option represents a different level of diversity engagement: Confronting privilege rationalizations, questioning privilege rationalizations, avoiding discussion of privilege rationalizations, and reinforcing privilege rationalizations. The respondent is asked to rate each response option in terms of how likely he/she is to behave in that manner. The actual scoring protocol is to be developed, but the goal is to produce a score for each respondent that measures his/her likelihood to engage in diversity issues.

Part 2 (28 scenarios) of the DiVET is designed to assess individual preferences for engaging diversity issues. That is, assuming a person engages in diversity issues, what strategies will the person use to engage the discussion? Part 2 of the DiVET uses the same race sensitive issues used in Part 1. However, in Part 2, each scenario has only two response options. One response option reflects a strategy that is impersonal, absolute, and/or prevention-oriented. A simple example of such this response strategy is the statement: “Discrimination is wrong.” Such a statement is: impersonal in that the statement does not reference the specific personal context, absolute in that the statement does not reference another individual/group, and prevention-oriented in that the statement focusing on avoiding negative outcomes. The second response option reflects a strategy that is personal, relational, and/or promotion-oriented. A simple example of such a response option is: “Have you considered how [a hypothetical minority represented in the scenario] might feel?” Such a statement is: personal in that the statement references the specific personal context, relational in that it references the respondent’s feelings in relation to the hypothetical minority’s feelings, and promotion-oriented in that that statement focuses on achieving positive outcomes. Once again, the actual scoring protocol is yet to be developed, but the goal of the protocol is to produce a score for each respondent that measures his/her preference for engaging diversity issues.

### **Validation Research**

The immediate need is to evaluate the psychometric properties of the DiVET. The DiVET is scheduled to be administered to volunteers in the incoming cohort of EOA trainees (August, 2010). Furthermore, a large sample of college undergraduates will be given the DiVET in the upcoming 2010-2011 academic year.



References

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