A Context-Independent Situational Judgment Test to Measure Prosocial Implicit Trait Policy

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Running Head: CONTEXT-INDEPENDENT SJT

Abstract

Two studies developed and validated a context-independent situational judgment test (SJT) of prosocial implicit trait policy (ITP). The first study developed an SJT based on critical incidents about the prosocial behavior of physicians, lawyers, community service volunteers, and human factors engineers. In a sample of 396 undergraduates, this SJT was internally consistent and correlated significantly with other trait constructs related to prosocial ITP. In the second study with 134 undergraduates, the SJT was significantly correlated with relevant trait constructs and prosocial performance in role-plays simulating scenarios in which others needed help. These results show that a generic SJT developed from items that describe situations and actions specific to several occupations can predict behavior in situations unlike any that appear in its items.

Keywords: Prosocial Implicit Trait Policy, Context-Independent Situational Judgment

Test

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Situational cues are usually assumed to be critical elements of situational judgment tests (SJTs) which are therefore widely presumed to be context-dependent (Krumm, Lievens, Huffmeier, Lipnevich, Bendels, & Hertel, 2015; Motowidlo, Dunnette, & Carter, 1990). This implies that an SJT cannot predict behavior in contexts that are not represented in the situational content of its items. However, conceptual developments presented by Motowidlo and Beier (2010) and Motowidlo, Hooper, and Jackson (2006) point to the possibility that an SJT designed to measure general domain knowledge about the importance of a particular trait expression for work effectiveness will generalize across different occupations and therefore can be context-independent. Then an SJT developed along these lines could predict behavior across a range of very different jobs, or even across a range of social situations that do not involve jobs in formal work organizations. The main goal of research reported here is to explore the feasibility of developing a generic SJT to measure general domain knowledge about the utility of prosocial action for work effectiveness. This article describes the development of this SJT, reports evidence for its construct-related validity, and tests the hypothesis that the prosocial ITP construct it was designed to measure can predict prosocial behavior in social settings different from any of the professional work settings described in its items.

General Domain Knowledge and Implicit Trait Policies

Scoring keys for SJTs typically compare applicants' judgments about the effectiveness of SJT response options with subject matter experts' judgments and assign higher scores to applicants whose judgments resemble subject matter experts' judgments. Consequently, the tests measure applicants' *procedural knowledge* about how to behave effectively in situations

described in SJT items (Clevenger, Pereira, Wiechmann, Schmitt, & Harvey, 2001; McDaniel & Nguyen, 2001; Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997; Motowidlo, Hanson, & Crafts, 1997; Weekley & Jones, 1999). Motowidlo et al., (2006) suggested that this procedural knowledge includes both *general knowledge*, which Motowidlo and Beier (2010) likened to the concept of “prior domain knowledge” in the extensive literature on knowledge acquisition (e.g., Beier & Ackerman, 2005; Hambrick, 2003; Hambrick & Engle, 2002; Van Overschelde & Healy, 2001), and *specific knowledge* about effective and ineffective behavior in a particular job. In this report, we are concerned with general knowledge about the utility of prosocial action in professional occupations. Our goal is to develop a generic SJT to measure general domain knowledge about the effectiveness of prosocial action. We call this particular type of general knowledge, *prosocial knowledge*.

We define prosocial knowledge as an implicit trait policy (ITP) (Motowidlo & Beier, 2010; Motowidlo et al., 2006) about the utility of prosocial expressions in social interactions. ITPs are implicit beliefs about relations between expressions of personality traits and behavioral effectiveness. When these beliefs are accurate, they represent general domain knowledge.

Although a prosocial ITP describes a general rule about the effectiveness of prosocial action, specific knowledge is a more detailed representation of the kinds of actions likely to be more or less effective in a specific situation. Consequently, someone might believe that prosocial action is generally more effective than antisocial action, but then learn exceptions to this rule and discover that in some specific situations the most effective actions are antisocial and in other situations prosociality is irrelevant for effectiveness.

Prosocial knowledge can be measured by asking people to judge the effectiveness of a set of actions including some that are prosocial and some that are antisocial and by computing the

difference between their effectiveness judgments for prosocial actions and their effectiveness judgments for antisocial actions. The larger the difference between their judgments about the effectiveness of prosocial and antisocial acts, the stronger their prosocial ITP and, thus, the more they know about the utility of prosocial action for effectiveness in social situations.

Situational judgment tests have been developed in this manner for several professional occupations including physicians (Ghosh, Motowidlo, & Nath, 2015; Kell, Motowidlo, Martin, Stotts, & Moreno, 2014), attorneys, (Yu, Martin, & Motowidlo, 2012), community service volunteers (Crook, Beier, Cox, Kell, Hanks, & Motowidlo, 2011; Motowidlo, Crook, Kell, & Naemi, 2009), and human factors engineers (Kortum & Motowidlo, 2006; Motowidlo, Martin, & Crook, 2013). Although these SJTs were developed according to a single-response format first described by (Motowidlo et al., 2009), traditional multiple-response formats can also be used to measure ITPs (Motowidlo et al., 2006; Motowidlo & Beier, 2010). As a set, these SJTs focus on several different professional occupations, but each SJT focuses on only one occupation. This reflects an implicit assumption that the prosocial ITP that each SJT measures is context-dependent. The assumption is that although each measures prosocial ITP, the occupational context of that ITP may importantly affect it so that people may develop beliefs that prosocial action is important for physicians' effectiveness, for instance, but not for attorneys' effectiveness. It also assumes that SJTs built for different occupations are not much correlated with each other and that an SJT for one occupational context is not likely to predict prosocial performance in a different occupational context.

Krumm et al. (2015) presented a persuasive case for an alternative position. They argued that SJTs might not be as context-dependent as widely assumed and presented evidence that the situational stems for many items in some SJTs make little or no difference in how people

respond to them. If situational cues do not matter, SJTs or, at least, some SJTs, could well be context-independent.

Motowidlo and Beier (2010) explained how the concepts of general domain knowledge and implicit trait policy implied the possibility that SJTs designed to measure an ITP targeted for a specific trait could be generalizable, at least across some jobs. They did not argue that ITPs are necessarily constant across all jobs. But they did suggest that ITPs might be stable across different jobs and organizational contexts within some domain.

Martin (2011) explicitly tested the hypothesis that prosocial knowledge measured by single-response SJTs generalizes across occupational domains. She administered three single-response SJTs that were developed for different occupations to 152 undergraduates. One consisted of prosocial and antisocial items about physicians' actions, another about human factors engineers' actions, and a third about community service volunteers' actions. Correlations between the three SJTs ranged from .28 to .52, with a mean of .38.

Research Objectives

Our overall research objective is to test the feasibility of developing a single-response SJT to measure generic prosocial ITP. Since Martin (2011) showed significant correlations between SJTs designed to measure prosocial ITPs in three different professional occupations, our development strategy is to include items from several occupational contexts in the same instrument. The way prosocial action is expressed in professional roles performed by engineers, community service volunteers, doctors, and lawyers is very different for one occupation to another. Nevertheless, because all those prosocial expressions involve helping others, our hypothesis is that a common core of beliefs about the utility of prosocial action in the form of helping runs through all of them. Thus, our first hypothesis is that SJT items that describe

prosocial and antisocial actions in one occupational setting correlate with items representing prosocial and antisocial actions in other occupational settings. We expect to find strong correlations between sets of SJT items that describe actions performed by engineers, community service volunteers, lawyers, and doctors.

If our development strategy succeeds in producing a valid measure of prosocial ITP, scores on that measure should correlate with trait constructs that are conceptually related to prosocial behavior. We adopt George's (1992) definition: "Prosocial behavior is helping behavior; it is behavior that is performed with the intent to aid or benefit another individual" (p. 197). Thus, we focus on trait concepts that are conceptually and/or empirically related to helping behavior.

First, of the Big Five personality traits, agreeableness has frequently been mentioned as an important determinant of prosocial behavior in general and volunteerism in particular (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005; Snyder & Dwyer, 2013).

Second, values for benevolence which, according to Schwartz (2012) "emphasize voluntary concern for others' welfare (helpful, honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, true friendship, mature love)" (p. 7) also bear a clear conceptual connection to prosocial action. Consequently, our measure of prosocial ITP should also be correlated with benevolent values.

Third, because people who have social vocational interests are presumed to be oriented toward social activities that involve personal service, teaching, and helping others (Holland, 1985), we expect that our measure of prosocial ITP will also be correlated with social vocational interests.

Fourth, as noted by Cote, DeCelles, McCarthy, Van Kleef, and Hideg (2011), "Emotional

intelligence has been overwhelmingly associated with prosociality in the popular press and the academic literature” (p. 1073). Research has shown that people higher in emotional intelligence tend to criticize others less frequently (Brackett, Rivers, Schiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006), behave less aggressively (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004), engage in less conflict with others (Lopes, Nezlek, Extremera, Hertel, Fernandez-Berrocal, Schutz, & Salovey, 2011), and help others more frequently (Lopes, Salovey, Côté, & Beers, 2005) than less emotionally intelligent people. Consequently, we expect that our measure of prosocial ITP will be correlated with both the understanding and management components of emotional intelligence (Libbrecht, Lievens, Carette, & Cote, 2014; MacCann & Roberts, 2008).

Fifth, according to Rushton (1981), prosocial people have internalized higher and more universal standards of justice, social responsibility, and modes of moral reasoning. Thus, we expect our measure of prosocial ITP will be correlated with ethical ideology. In particular, we expect it will be positively correlated with idealistic ethical principles which hold that it is always necessary and possible to avoid harming others and negatively correlated with relativistic principles which hold that it is sometimes necessary to harm others in order to accomplish a greater good (Forsyth, 1980).

Based on this literature on trait correlates of helping and prosocial action, our second hypothesis is that our measure of prosocial ITP will be positively correlated with agreeableness, benevolent values, social vocational interests, emotional intelligence in the form of both emotional understanding and emotional management, and idealistic ethical ideology and negatively correlated with relativistic ethical ideology. Importantly, we do not presume the SJT we develop will *measure* these trait constructs. Instead, these traits are presumed to be *antecedents* of the prosocial ITP construct which our SJT is intended to measure. Our model

predicts that people who are agreeable, benevolent, interested in social vocational activities, emotionally intelligent, ethically idealistic, and *not* ethically relativistic are more likely to develop beliefs that prosocial professional action is effective and antisocial action is ineffective and will therefore harbor ITPs that acknowledge the importance of prosocial action for professional effectiveness. Consequently, correlations with these traits need not approximate 1.0 to support the convergent, construct-related validity of the SJT.

Our third hypothesis is that prosocial ITP as measured by this generic, single-response SJT can predict prosocial behavior in social settings different from any of the occupational settings represented in its items. Undergraduates' social experiences on campus during the normal course of campus life are very different from the settings and actions depicted in SJT items about social interactions that engage professionals while performing their duties. Consequently, a test of the hypothesis that our single-response SJT can predict undergraduates' prosocial behavior in ordinary campus interactions is a stringent test of our SJT's context dependence.

Undergraduates in this study represent pools of applicants likely to complete SJTs like ours and/or other instruments for admission to educational programs or for selection into jobs like those represented in the content of SJT items. For instance, students who are engineering majors will apply for engineering jobs; students sometimes are selected to participate in voluntary community service activities; students apply to medical schools which may soon supplement the Medical College Admission Test with an SJT designed to measure interpersonal competencies like those represented in prosocial content of our SJT (American Association of Medical Colleges, 2015); and students apply to law schools which could supplement their Law

School Admissions Test with an SJT designed to tap various competencies including interpersonal skills (Shultz & Zedeck, 2012).

Study 1

Study 1 was done to a) develop a generic, single-response SJT to measure prosocial ITP and, b) test our hypothesis about relations between SJT items that refer to different occupational contexts, and c) test our hypothesis about relations between SJT scores and measures of other constructs.

Method

We selected items for the SJT by reviewing items used in previous studies of single-response SJTs for physicians (Ghosh et al., 2015; Kell et al., 2014), lawyers (Yu et al., 2012), human factors engineers (Kortum & Motowidlo, 2006; Motowidlo et al., 2013), and community service volunteers (Crook et al., 2011; Motowidlo et al., 2009). These items were derived from critical incidents collected during interviews and meetings with nurses (about physicians), lawyers, human factors engineers and managers, and administrators of community service organizations. We also developed some items based on response options from a traditional multiple-response SJT that was developed for management positions (Motowidlo et al., 1990). Thus, our preliminary set of items describing prosocial or antisocial actions included 32 items about physicians, 31 about lawyers, 20 about human factors engineers, 26 about community service volunteers, and 41 about managers.

Five doctoral students in psychology rated all items for the degree to which the actions they described were either prosocial or antisocial. We defined prosocial actions for them as actions that express qualities such as agreeableness, benevolence, compassion, caring, respect, generosity, courtesy, civility, cooperativeness, and tact. We defined antisocial actions as actions

that express qualities such as disagreeableness, malevolence, coldness, indifference, disrespect, selfishness, rudeness, incivility, uncooperativeness, and insensitivity. They rated the actions on a 7-point scale anchored with 1 = very antisocial, 2 = somewhat antisocial, 3 = slightly antisocial, 4 = neither prosocial nor antisocial, 5 = slightly prosocial, 6 = somewhat prosocial, and 7 = very prosocial. Inter-rater correlations ranged from .75 to .87 with a mean of .82. This produced an intra-class reliability estimate of .95 for the mean of 5 raters.

We computed the mean prosocial rating for each item and compared prosocial ratings for items that we intended to represent antisocial behavior with prosocial ratings for items that we intended to represent prosocial behavior. If we are successful in developing items that represent prosocial and antisocial behavior as we intended, prosocial ratings for prosocial items should be substantially greater than 4 on the 7-point scale and prosocial ratings for antisocial items should be substantially less than 4. Averaged across raters, prosocial ratings for intended prosocial items are 5.96 for physicians, 5.96 for lawyers, 5.87 for engineers, 6.06 for volunteers, and 5.61 for managers. Ratings for intended antisocial items are 1.93 for physicians, 1.98 for lawyers, 2.18 for engineers, 2.44 for volunteers, and 4.02 for managers. Apparently, when we tried to develop antisocial items for managers by adapting response items from a multiple-response SJT, many of the items that we intended to be antisocial were actually rated by our judges as prosocial. Consequently, we decided to drop the managers' items from consideration and restrict the item pool to items for the other 4 occupations, items that were developed specifically from critical incidents about especially effective or ineffective behavior in those occupations. Then we identified items that were either especially high with a mean rating greater than 5 on the 7-point scale, or especially low with a mean rating less than 3. By dropping the other items with ratings between 3 and 5, we were left with 101 items about physicians, lawyers, engineers, and

volunteers that were either especially high or especially low in rated prosociality.

We administered this preliminary set of SJT items (the questionnaire that contained these items also included the items about managers and items that did not satisfy our criteria for being either especially high or low in rated prosociality, but they were not used in any subsequent analyses) to 396 undergraduates who completed it for experimental credit in their psychology courses. (Information about their demographic characteristics is not available.) Focusing on the subset of 101 items that were judged as especially high or low in prosociality for physicians, lawyers, human factors engineers, and volunteers, we reverse-scored effectiveness ratings for antisocial items and computed the mean effectiveness rating assigned to the prosocial items and the mean rating assigned to the antisocial items. We summed the two means to produce a single total score for each person who completed the SJT. Then we correlated ratings for each SJT item with this total score to identify items with the strongest item total correlations. We identified 5 prosocial items and 5 antisocial items for each occupational group with the strongest item-total correlations. These 40 items make up the final version of the SJT measure entitled, “Opinions about Professional Conduct” (OPC) (Mean = 247.9, SD = 21.4, alpha = .93). The instrument and scoring directions appear in Appendix A.

We also administered several other self-report, paper-and-pencil tests in this order: Forsyth’s (1980) 20-item Ethics Position Questionnaire to measure ethical beliefs about idealism and relativism; Goldberg’s (1992) 50-item International Personality Item Pool to measure agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and adjustment; Holland’s (1985) 12-item scale for social vocational interests; MacCann and Roberts’ (2008) 42-item Situational Test of Emotional Understanding and 44-item Situational Test of Emotional Management to measure emotional intelligence; Schwartz’s (1992) 56-item Value Survey to measure values for

universalism, power, conformity, achievement, self-direction, tradition, benevolence, hedonism, spirituality, security, and stimulation. Finally, we administered the preliminary 150-item version of the SJT last. Students had 2 hours to complete this battery of tests, but they actually took an average of about 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Results and Discussion

To examine relations between items in different occupational contexts, we computed 4 separate SJT scores, one for each set of 10 items in each occupational context. We then conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using MPlus (Version 7; Muthen & Muthen, 2012) to determine whether the 4 SJT scores load on a single factor. Results show that they do: factor loadings ranged from .83 to .90 on the single factor. The fit of this model was also very good: χ^2 ($N = 388$; $df = 2$) = 2.91 ($p = .233$), the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) = .034, and the confirmatory fit index (CFI) = .999.

Correlations between the 4 SJT scores ranged from .72 to .78 with a mean of .74 and their internal consistency reliability estimates ranged from .77 to .79 with a mean of .78. When adjusted for attenuation, correlations ranged from .92 to 1.00 with a mean of .95.

These results support our first hypothesis, but because we selected items according to item-total correlations in the same set of data, we capitalize on chance in ways that probably overestimate correlations between items. Consequently, although these results confirm our first hypothesis, they need to be replicated in an independent sample. Study 2 in this report provides such a sample.

Another issue that threatens the internal validity of these findings is that common method bias might account for high correlations observed between SJT scores for different occupations. Because all 4 occupational SJT scores were derived from the same single-response format using

the same 7-point rating scale, this common method allows individual differences in extreme response tendency to be expressed the same way in all 4 sets of SJT items. If this is true, people who tend to rate at the extremes (1 and 7) would get high SJT scores in all 4 occupations and people who tend to rate close to the scale midpoint (4) would get low SJT scores in all 4 occupations.

To explore this possibility, we rescored SJT items in a way that controls for individual differences in extreme response tendency. We scored each SJT item dichotomously as correct (1) or incorrect (0). Items that described prosocial actions were scored as correct if the effectiveness rating was either 5 (slightly effective), 6 (somewhat effective), or 7 (very effective) and as incorrect if the rating was anything else (or missing). Items that described antisocial actions were scored as correct if the effectiveness rating was either 3 (slightly ineffective), 2 (somewhat ineffective), or 1 (very ineffective) and as incorrect if the rating was anything else (or missing). This is similar to the dichotomous scoring method described by Whetzel and McDaniel (2009, p. 200). We summed these dichotomous scores separately for each occupation. Internal consistency reliability estimates for the 10-item SJT scores for each occupation ranged from .57 to .62, with a mean of .59. Correlations between them ranged from .49 to .59, with a mean of .54. When the correlations were adjusted for attenuation according to their internal consistency estimates, they ranged from .82 to 1.0, with a mean of .93. These results show that although their reliabilities drop when SJT items are scored dichotomously to control for effects of extreme response tendencies, they were still about as strongly correlated across occupations as their reliabilities allow. We also computed a total OPC score based on dichotomously scored SJT items. The correlation between the continuous OPC score ($M = 247.93$, $SD = 21.40$) and the dichotomous OPC score ($M = 36.97$, $SD = 3.87$) was .79 ($p < .01$). Correlations between

continuous OPC scores and other self-report measures appear in Table 1. They show that the second hypothesis about relations between prosocial ITP measured by the OPC and other constructs is supported for 6 of the 7 constructs that we expected to be associated with prosocial ITP. Correlations in Table 1 support the construct-related validity of the OPC as a measure of prosocial ITP by confirming theoretical expectations that people who appreciate the utility of prosocial action for professional effectiveness, as measured by the OPC, are more agreeable ($r = .32$), benevolent ($r = .31$), interested in social vocational activities ($r = .22$), and emotionally intelligent with respect to emotional understanding ($r = .32$) and emotional management ($r = .32$). They are also less likely to adhere to relativistic beliefs that what is ethical depends on situational parameters ($r = -.19$).

 Insert Table 1 about here

Correlations with several traits that are not theoretically related to the prosociality construct were lower. For instance, prosocial ITP correlated .18 with conscientiousness, .13 with openness, .08 with extraversion, and .04 with adjustment. Similarly, correlations with values other than benevolence ranged from .20 to -.13. These results provide evidence for discriminant validity.

Correlations with dichotomous OPC scores showed a similar pattern. This suggests that correlations between OPC scores and traits listed in Table 1 are not attributable to effects of individual differences in extreme response tendency.

Study 2

Study 2 was done to test a) our first hypothesis about relations between SJT items that

refer to different occupational contexts, b) part of our second hypothesis about relations between prosocial ITP scores and measures of other constructs, and c) our third hypothesis that prosocial ITP as measured by the OPC can predict prosocial behavior in a context different from the work-related contexts described in OPC items.

Method

The sample of research participants consisted of 134 undergraduates who took part in this study for research credit applied to their courses in psychology. They included 46 males and 88 females. Fifty-two self-identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 10 as African American, 51 as Caucasian, 17 as Hispanic, 1 as Arab/North African, 2 as Middle Eastern, and 1 as other. There were 67 freshmen, 32 sophomores, 24 juniors, and 11 seniors. They ranged in age from 18 to 22 ($M = 19.3$, $SD = 1.15$). They participated in questionnaire administration and role-play simulations individually.

First, each participant completed a battery of self-report, paper-and-pencil measures in this order: the demographics questionnaire; the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg, 1992) to measure agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, openness, and adjustment; the Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU) and the Situational Test of Emotional Management (STEM) (MacCann & Roberts, 2008) to measure emotional intelligence; and the 40-item OPC developed in Study 1 to measure prosocial ITP. We restricted the battery of self-report measures to these instruments, instead of including the full battery used in Study 1, because of time constraints. Then they participated in role-play scenarios. Students had 1 hour to complete the battery of tests and role-play scenarios, but they actually took an average of about 40 minutes.

The role-play scenarios were developed by undergraduate research assistants to represent situations in which an undergraduate might respond more or less prosocially to events that could occur during the normal the course of campus life. There were 10 role-play scenarios designed to take about one minute each. An experimenter introduced the role-play simulations by instructing participants they would be simulating interactions with various people on their campus. To start the first role-play, the participant read a short description of the simulation setting and when ready to start the role-play, signaled the experimenter, and said what he she would say if in the simulated setting. These responses were recorded on videotape.

Four researchers individually rated each videotaped role-play performance for the degree of prosociality it expressed on a 7-point scale with anchors ranging from 1 = very antisocial, through 4 = neither prosocial nor antisocial, to 7 = very prosocial. We summed across the 4 raters for each of the 10 role-play performances.

We submitted the 10 role-play scores to an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. Three components with eigenvalues larger 1.0 emerged, but only one scenario had its primary loading on the third component. Accordingly, we factored again and forced a two-component solution. The two components accounted for 47% of the variance and were reasonably interpretable. The first component consisted mainly of scenarios in which someone needs help and the participant can choose whether and how much help to give. The second component involved scenes in which someone acts inconsiderately toward the character played by the research participant and the participant can choose whether and how to confront that person about his or her inconsideration.

We followed up the exploratory factor analysis with a confirmatory factor analysis to test the hypothesis that a two-factor model with 5 role-plays about someone needing help in one

factor and 5 role-plays about someone acting inconsiderately in the other factor provides a better fit to the data than a single-factor model that combines all role-plays into a single score. For the two factor model, χ^2 (N = 132; DF = 34) = 49.52, RMSEA = .059, CFI = .940; for the single-factor model, χ^2 (N = 132; DF = 35) = 54.25. A chi-square difference test between the two-factor model and the single-factor model indicated that the two-factor model fit the data better, χ^2 (N = 132, 1) = 4.73, $p < .05$.

Guided by results of the factor analyses and our analysis of scenario content, we computed two role-play scores. One is the sum of 5 role-play performances in scenes in which others need help and one is the sum of 5 performances in which others act inconsiderately. Scenarios included in each role-play sum are shown in Appendix B.

The intra-class reliability for the sum of 4 raters across scenarios is .77 for scenarios that involve others needing help and .78 for scenarios that involve others acting inconsiderately. We summed across raters and computed correlations between the 5 performances in each type of scenario. For scenarios about others needing help, correlations ranged from .23 to .46 with a mean of .32, yielding an internal consistency reliability estimate (alpha) of .69. For scenarios about others acting inconsiderately, correlations ranged from .16 to .42 with a mean of .29, yielding an internal consistency reliability estimate (alpha) of .67. The correlation between summed performance scores for others needing help and others acting inconsiderately was .46 ($p < .01$).

Results and Discussion

As in Study 1, we computed a total SJT score from each set of 10 items about prosocial actions in each occupation and computed a confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the 4 SJT scores load on a single factor. Results show that they do; factor loadings ranged from .69

to .88 on the single factor. The fit of this model was also good; χ^2 ($N = 132$, $df = 2$) = .23 ($p = .891$), RMSEA = .000, and CFI = 1.000.

Correlations between the 4 SJT scores ranged from .53 to .72 with a mean of .63 and their internal consistency reliabilities ranged from .67 to .75. When adjusted for attenuation, correlations ranged from .76 to 1.00 with a mean of .89.

We also computed dichotomous SJT scores as in Study 1 separately for the 4 sets of SJT items. Correlations between the 4 dichotomous scores ranged from .35 to .60 with a mean of .47. Their internal consistency reliability estimates ranged from .30 to .62 with a mean of .48. When adjusted for attenuation, correlations between them ranged from .69 to 1.5 with a mean of 1.0.

These results support the hypothesis that SJT items that describe prosocial and antisocial actions in one occupational setting correlate with items representing prosocial and antisocial actions in other occupational settings. It is important to note that this result is obtained in an independent sample that was not used to make decisions about which items to include in the SJT.

Correlations between prosocial ITP, personality traits, and emotional intelligence appear in Table 2. It shows that prosocial ITP as measured by the OPC is significantly correlated with agreeableness ($r = .22$) and both the understanding component ($r = .20$) and the management component ($r = .42$) of emotional intelligence, as expected. This adds support for the convergent, construct-related validity of the OPC as a measure of prosocial ITP.

Insert Table 2 about here

Except for conscientiousness ($r = .22$), correlations between prosocial ITP and the other Big Five traits are lower than the correlation with agreeableness, again supporting the discriminant validity of the SJT.

Finally, Table 2 also shows that prosocial ITP is significantly correlated with prosocial performance in role-play simulations that involve others needing help ($r = .24, p < .01$), but not with prosocial performance in simulations that involve others acting inconsiderately ($r = -.02$). This confirms our third hypothesis with respect to prosocial behavior in situations that involve others needing help.

Correlations with the dichotomous OPC score in Table 2 show a similar pattern of relations with agreeableness ($r = .23, p < .05$), the understanding component of emotional intelligence ($r = .23, p < .01$), the management component of emotional intelligence ($r = .49, p < .01$), and prosocial performance in role-play situations where others need help ($r = .36, p < .01$).

General Discussion

Taken together, results of Studies 1 and 2 support the feasibility of developing a generic, context-independent SJT to measure general domain knowledge in the form of ITPs about the utility of prosocial action for work effectiveness. By including single-response SJT items describing actions that depict either high or low levels of prosociality, we constructed an SJT that is internally consistent and reliable. Scores on this SJT correlate as theoretically expected with measures of agreeableness, benevolent values, social vocational interests, emotional intelligence and relativistic ethical ideology. And, importantly, they predict prosocial behavior in simulated social contexts that involve reacting to others who need help in situations that are different from the situational contexts of any of the work-related items that make up the SJT.

SJT scores were not correlated with what we thought would be prosocial performance in situations that involve others acting inconsiderately. We did not expect this result, but it could mean prosocial ITP as measured by the OPC has more to do with taking action to aid others who need help and less to do with showing tolerance and patience for others who have acted inconsiderately. That possibility needs to be tested in further research.

Our results contribute to the literatures on SJTs and prosocial work behavior in several ways. First, they confirm arguments and empirical evidence recently published by Krumm et al. (2014) that question widely held assumptions that SJTs are necessarily context-dependent. In line with speculations and conclusions drawn by Motowidlo and Beier (2010) and Motowidlo et al. (2006), our results show it is possible to develop a context-independent SJT. Our results pertain to an SJT that measures prosocial ITP, a construct that is broad in the sense that Krumm et al. (2015) attributed to basic personality tendencies. Although the construct is broad and generic, individual SJT items that we used to measure it describe specific details about occupational contexts. However, by combining items for four different occupations in the same SJT, we made the set of items “generic”, even if individually they are occupationally specific.

Second, our results show that ITP about the utility of prosocial action in work settings is a viable construct related to other trait constructs in theoretically meaningful ways and potentially useful for predicting prosocial action in social settings that involve reacting to others who need help. Prosocial ITP is embedded in a network of relations with constructs such as agreeableness, benevolent values, social vocational interests, emotional intelligence and relativistic ethical ideology.

Although results of our studies show it is possible to develop a context-independent SJT by combining items that represent several different occupations, we need research in applied

settings to study the practical usefulness of this approach for informing real employment decisions. Mixing items about different occupations raises at least two issues that need to be addressed. One has to do with validation. It will probably be difficult to generate validation evidence according to a content-related design because SJT items involve occupational settings likely to be different from any particular occupation where the SJT is used operationally. This means validation evidence may have to rely on criterion-related designs and if the SJT is developed like the one described in this report to measure a specific construct, then construct-related validation evidence may come into play as well.

Another issue has to do with face validity. How are job applicants likely to react to a testing procedure that asks them about job situations in occupational contexts different from the one for which they are applying? This depends on how the SJT is presented and whether applicants can be shown that the test content actually is related to their occupational context, but from a broader perspective. The SJT described in this report, for instance, is most likely to be seen as relevant for selection into jobs that can be described as “professional” or that require a high degree of “professionalism” for effective performance. Then the SJT could be presented as a way to test how much applicants know about standards of professionalism common to all professional occupations.

SJTs like the one described in this report could also be developed to measure ITPs for other traits or compound traits. In addition to prosociality, which centers largely on the personality trait of agreeableness, ITPs about traits related to facets of conscientiousness could also be measured with SJTs. They could include ITPs about dimensions such as ethical leadership in management positions, compliance with regulations regarding safety practices, integrity and law enforcement in police and security occupations, effort and diligence in detail

attention, and so on. Such matters are most likely to be useful subjects for ITPs to the extent they represent examples of effective performance that some people might be tempted to skirt to save time or other resources. Then people who fail to recognize that actions that illustrate the high ends of these dimensions are more effective than actions at the low ends would be inclined to take short-cuts on performance dimensions like these for personal convenience or short term gains.

The content of our SJT items might make one wonder whether high scores reflect anything more than a desire to appear socially desirable. By rating the effectiveness of prosocial and antisocial actions, people show whether they know that prosocial actions are professionally desirable (“effective”) and that antisocial actions are professionally undesirable (“ineffective”). People who are inclined to appear socially desirable may score higher on this SJT, but only if they know that prosocial actions are professionally desirable. Thus, although there are some similarities between the concepts of social desirability and prosocial ITP as measured by our SJT, they are different primarily because social desirability implies motivation to incur social approval whereas prosocial ITP implies knowledge that prosocial action is professionally effective and therefore desirable but antisocial action is not.

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Table 1

Correlations between Prosocial ITP measured by the OPC and other constructs

					Correlation with Prosocial ITP	
					Continuous	Dichotomous
	M	SD	Alpha	Score	Score	
Personality						
Agreeableness	54.8	8.6	0.83	.32** (386)	.27** (392)	
Conscientiousness	48.4	9.9	0.82	.18** (384)	.12* (384)	
Extraversion	41.4	11.6	0.92	.08 (387)	.05 (393)	
Openness	50.2	8.0	0.77	.13* (387)	.10 (393)	
Adjustment	41.5	10.5	0.89	.04 (386)	.05 (392)	
Values						
Universalism	39.8	8.4	0.82	.20** (379)	.13* (385)	
Power	19.1	6.8	0.79	-.13* (379)	-.14* (385)	

CONTEXT-INDEPENDENT SJT

				(383)	(389)
Conformity	20.8	4.2	0.67	.12*	.00
				(384)	(390)
Achievement	34.2	5.2	0.78	.12*	-.01
				(387)	(393)
Self-Direction	27.6	5.1	0.73	.13*	.02
				(387)	(393)
Tradition	19.7	6.9	0.56	.03	-.03
				(384)	(390)
Benevolence	40.8	5.8	0.79	.31**	.17**
				(385)	(391)
Hedonism	11.0	2.6	0.75	-.02	-.06
				(388)	(394)
Spirituality	18.5	5.2	0.54	.13**	.07
				(388)	(394)
Security	37.0	6.3	0.74	.12*	-.03
				(387)	(393)
Stimulation	14.7	4.1	0.75	.10	.02
				(387)	(393)
Social Interests	5.1	0.8	0.75	.22**	.22**
				(387)	(393)
Ethical Ideology					
Idealism	5.9	1.3	0.84	.06	-.04

CONTEXT-INDEPENDENT SJT

				(387)	(393)
Relativism	5.5	1.2	0.86	-.19**	-.16**
				(388)	(394)
Emotional Intelligence					
Understanding	0.7	0.1	0.61	.32**	.38**
				(364)	(369)
Management	0.51	0.07	0.71	.35**	.40**
				(377)	(382)

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Sample sizes appear in parentheses.

Table 2

Correlations between Role-Play Performance, Personality Traits, and Emotional Intelligence in Study 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Role-Play											
Performance											
1.Others need help	.77										
2.Others act inconsiderably	.59** (132)	.78									
Prosocial ITP											
3.Continuous Score	.24** (132)	-.02 (133)	.90								
4.Dichotomous Score	.36** (132)	.16 (133)	.79** (134)	.79							
Personality											
5.Agreeableness	.23** (127)	.25** (128)	.22* (129)	.28** (129)	.84						
6.Conscientiousness	.06 (127)	-.10 (128)	.20* (129)	.11 (129)	.07 (129)	.80					
7.Extraversion	.08 (127)	.09 (128)	.22* (129)	.09 (129)	.35** (129)	.11 (129)	.90				
8.Openness	-.04 (127)	.00 (128)	.14 (129)	.07 (129)	.28** (129)	.00 (129)	.30** (129)	.81			
9.Adjustment	-.07 (127)	.07 (128)	.08 (129)	.06 (129)	.12 (129)	.17* (129)	.26** (129)	.02 (129)	.89		
Emotional Intelligence											
10. Understanding	-.02 (128)	-.08 (129)	.20* (130)	.23** (130)	-.07 (125)	.12 (125)	-.02 (125)	.08 (125)	.05 (125)	.55	
11.Management	.20 (129)	.04 (130)	.42** (130)	.49** (130)	.09 (125)	.18* (125)	-.03 (125)	.03 (125)	.04 (125)	.51 (126)	.70

CONTEXT-INDEPENDENT SJT

M	106.5	96.1	247.3	36.9	54.6	47.4	42.7	48.8	41.7	29.3	21.6
SD	11.0	12.6	17.8	3.4	8.4	8.9	11.5	8.3	11.4	4.0	3.2

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Reliability estimates appear on the diagonal and sample sizes appear in parentheses.

Appendices

Appendix A

Opinions about Professional Conduct

This questionnaire asks for your opinions about effective conduct in a variety of professional contexts such as law, medicine, voluntary community service, and engineering. It lists specific actions that people working in these areas might perform and asks you to judge how effective they are by placing a number from 1 to 7 directly under the action, where...

1= very ineffective

4 = neither effective

5 = slightly effective

2= somewhat ineffective nor ineffective

6 = somewhat effective

3= slightly ineffective

7 = very effective

1. This person volunteered to coordinate a brunch for a fund-raising event, but failed to arrange for food and people to serve it when she was supposed to.

Effectiveness_____ -

2. When this engineer had trouble getting a design specialist, who had a history of conflict with the engineer's supervisor, to provide some technical information the engineer needed, he tried to get him to co-operate by explaining the goals of his project and the importance of the design specialist's contribution.

Effectiveness_____ +

3. This community service volunteer worked with a client who had no family in state and whose family out of state disowned him because he had AIDS. When the client died, the volunteer helped to plan the funeral, notified the family, packed up the client's possessions, and attended the funeral.

Effectiveness _____ +

4. This community service volunteer took the child she was mentoring to see a play that was based on a book the child had already read. After the play, she discussed differences between the book and the play with child and selected another book for the child to read.

Effectiveness _____ +

5. When trying to convince his client to accept his design recommendations, this engineer told her he was part of a world-class engineering firm and she would be stupid not to take his recommendation.

Effectiveness _____ -

6. A patient's condition worsened on a Saturday night. When called, this physician responded promptly and worked with the nurses to solve the problem.

Effectiveness _____ +

7. This engineer on a product design team disagreed with the other engineers who were unanimous about the preferred design. He began raising his voice and telling the team about his education credentials. When the team decided to go with their preferred design, this engineer stormed angrily out of the room.

Effectiveness _____ -

8. When his client dismissed him to hire another attorney, this attorney who was dismissed made several disparaging remarks about the new attorney to people they both knew.

Effectiveness _____ -

9. A patient with liver problems was in the ICU with her mother. After this physician examined her, he left the room to continue his rounds. When the mother asked him a few minutes later to come back because her daughter had more questions, the physician agreed and returned to the

room.

Effectiveness _____ +

10. Although he was only one member of the design team, this engineer took full credit for designing a new keyboard and became angrily defensive when others on the team confronted him about this.

Effectiveness _____ -

11. This attorney volunteered to go to court to represent the client of another attorney who could not appear in court because he had a serious operation.

Effectiveness _____ +

12. A patient who was recovering from knee replacement surgery was having difficulty with rehabilitation exercises due to the pain. This physician scolded the patient and told her she was not trying hard enough.

Effectiveness _____ -

13. When a cancer patient died, this physician gently informed the family members, gave them time to absorb the news, and offered them emotional support.

Effectiveness _____ +

14. When a judge who had been presiding over hearings all morning asked for a 10-minute break, this attorney objected and demanded that his motion be heard immediately.

Effectiveness _____ -

15. In a meeting between several attorneys and their clients, this attorney dominated the conversation, interrupted clients whenever they tried to speak, and told the other attorneys what he thought they should be doing.

Effectiveness _____ -

16. When this attorney discovered that his opposing counsel would be on vacation on the day set for their trial, he had the trial date changed for a time more convenient for the opposing counsel.

Effectiveness_____+

17. When this engineer heard about a technical problem in another department that could cause delays in his own project, he offered to help the other department resolve their problem before it affected his project.

Effectiveness_____+

18. When her very irritated opposing counsel was explaining his position to her, this attorney listened quietly without interrupting and after making sure she understood her opposing counsel's position calmly explained her own position.

Effectiveness_____+

19. This community service volunteer was assigned to relieve a staff receptionist over the receptionist's one-hour lunch break. The volunteer answered the telephone in a casual, unprofessional way, spoke very loudly, and made personal telephone calls.

Effectiveness_____ -

20. When this engineer was assigned to work on a project with another engineer with whom he had a long history of personal conflicts, he confronted him and suggested that they put their personal differences aside and carry out their assigned project as well as they could.

Effectiveness_____+

21. A patient was at the nurse's station waiting to speak with this physician who was standing there speaking with one of the nurses who was taking care of the patient. The physician publicly criticized the nurse for not doing a good job.

Effectiveness_____ -

22. A woman became very ill when her bone marrow transplant procedure did not go well. This physician spent a great deal of time meeting with the patient's husband and close friends to help them understand the situation.

Effectiveness_____ +

23. Although he told the opposing counsel in a meeting before trial that it would be acceptable to have some portions of the evidence in a case mailed to his office, later, in court, this attorney denied saying the evidence could be mailed to him and argued that it should not be used in the case.

Effectiveness_____ -

24. When one of the participants in the temporary task force group this engineer was leading started performing poorly because she resented being transferred from her regular job to be on the task force, this engineer told her that her contribution was important to the success of the project and that he very much needed the special expertise she could bring to it.

Effectiveness_____ +

25. This community service volunteer was mentoring a female client who was required to do community service as part of her probation, but who often missed appointments and failed to perform community service obligations. The volunteer asked the client whether the mentoring relationship was important to her, told her client that she, at least, wanted the mentoring relationship to continue, and told her what she needed from the client in order to continue working with her.

Effectiveness_____ +

26. This physician had to perform a privacy-invading procedure on a patient who spoke only

Spanish. He was unable to communicate with her and started the procedure before a translator could arrive.

Effectiveness _____ -

27. This community service volunteer was meeting for the first time with a young girl who had attention deficit disorder. The volunteer did not say much or engage the girl in active conversation.

Effectiveness _____ -

28. Although this engineer declined an invitation to participate and contribute ideas in the initial design phase of a project, once the project got underway, he criticized the design concept that others developed and tried hard to change the entire direction of the project.

Effectiveness _____ -

29. When this defense attorney realized that a new and inexperienced defense attorney did not know how to complete documents pertaining to jury selection, she sent him examples of similar documents completed in earlier cases so he could see how they should be completed.

Effectiveness _____ +

30. When his client told this attorney that he did not have the documents to prove he had invested money that his mother loaned him, the attorney told him, "Well, if you don't have them, make them."

Effectiveness _____ -

31. When this community service volunteer was placed in charge of a shelter, he gave vague and inconsistent instructions to volunteers who staffed the service center.

Effectiveness _____ -

32. This community service volunteer was assigned to answer a help line to provide information

and referrals. On this occasion, the volunteer interrupted a caller to say what the caller was doing was a sin and he should be sorry for his actions.

Effectiveness_____ -

33. This volunteer was walking by the information desk in a hospital after her shift was over. She overheard someone in a wheelchair ask the person assigned to the information desk to take her to another location in the hospital. Rather than have the desk attendant leave her post, this volunteer offered to take her where she wanted to go herself.

Effectiveness_____ +

34. When this engineer's coworker approached her to ask what he should do about a performance review he just received from his manager that he thought was completely unfair, the engineer told him that she refused to discuss the review with him.

Effectiveness_____ -

35. A patient came to an appointment with a list of symptoms and possible prognosis after researching his condition online. This physician became very abrupt when he saw that the patient had come to his own conclusions.

Effectiveness_____ -

36. When this engineer's project began having problems that could put it behind schedule, the engineer met with her project team to have them decide as a group whether to delay the deadline or work overtime to get the project back on schedule.

Effectiveness_____ +

37. A young boy brought a book with him when he was going to be examined by his pediatrician. This physician mentioned that his son like that book too and talked to the patient

about it for a few minutes before performing the exam.

Effectiveness_____+

38. This attorney went to court to file documents for another attorney whose husband had just been hospitalized for a serious illness.

Effectiveness_____+

39. When the Red Cross was inundated with calls from people wanting to help after the 9/11 disaster, this community service volunteer took the initiative to organize and file the incoming calls so other Red Cross volunteers could call them all back efficiently.

Effectiveness_____+

40. A patient with cardiac problems and his family had been meeting with this physician repeatedly over several months. When members of the family ran into the physician in a hospital elevator one night, he stared straight ahead without acknowledging them.

Effectiveness_____ -

Note: Plus and minus signs indicate whether an item describes a prosocial action (+) or an antisocial action (-). Of course, these signs do not appear on the questionnaire when administered. It is scored by reversing ratings for all antisocial items and then summing across all 40 items.

Appendix B

Scenarios about Others Needing Help and Others Acting Inconsiderately

Others Needing Help:

You're with your friends at a public party. You see that someone from one of your classes has been drinking very heavily and has lost consciousness. One of your friends also notices this and comes over to ask you if you and he should do something about it. You tell him...

One of your friends consistently misses a class you two have together because she hates the class. She is doing very badly in the class, but you're doing fine because you attend class and you know the material well. She asks you for help in the class because she doesn't want to fail, but this would definitely cut into your own study time. So you tell her...

Your significant other is not on good terms with your best friend who is also your roommate. They refuse to be in the same room with each other, and it is becoming a very stressful part of your life as you are forced to constantly arbitrate between the two of them. On this particular occasion, you are watching a movie with your roommate when your significant other comes to visit. You can see that a fight is about to happen, so you say...

Your friend is drinking way too heavily. You would like for him to go home, but he insists on sticking with you for the rest of the evening. You respond to him by saying.....

Your significant other trash-talks one of your best friends. You never noticed a problem between the two of them, and this is very out of character for your significant other. So you tell your significant other...

Others Acting Inconsiderately:

You're late for a meeting. You run to the bike rack to grab your bike and see that someone has accidentally locked your bike with theirs. So you walk to your meeting and arrive late. When you get back to your dormitory, you see this person unlocking his bike next to yours. You decide to say something to him so it won't happen again. You tap him on the shoulder and say...

Your lab ran later than expected and you realize that you might not be able to make it to dinner. To be safe, you ask a friend to grab dinner for you before the server closes. By the time you get back, the server doors are closed and you go to look for your friend. When you find her, she tells you she completely forgot and did not manage to get you anything for dinner. You respond by saying...

You planned to study with a friend at the library, but he ditches you to go to pub. Next morning when you see him you say.....

You and your significant other are on a date. He or she asks you to pay for the entire meal because they left their wallet at home and politely, you agree to take the bill. When the check comes, you see that the check is larger than you thought it would be and now you don't really want to pay. Your significant other sees you eyeing the check and the displeasure on your face,

so he/she asks you if anything is wrong with the bill. You say...

You loaned a textbook to one of your friends two weeks before a big exam, and she promised that she would only need it for a day or two. One week later you ask her to return the book, but she says that she has been overwhelmed and needs the book for one more day. She promises to bring it to your room as soon as she is done. It is now several days before the exam and if you don't get your book now you risk making a bad grade. When you see your friend in the server you say...