Title: Selecting for Social Intelligence: Interests, Experiences and Aptitudes that Predict MBA Leadership Performance

Abstract:
We investigate the antecedents of MBA student performance, including academic performance and leadership performance. Our pre-MBA predictors include measures of life interests that reduce to two factors, mirroring the colloquial “poets and quants” distinction, as well as demographics, aptitudes, and school and work experiences. Our performance outcomes include two dimensions of core course grades (technical and social) as well as peer-ratings of leadership skills such as assertiveness, perspective-taking, collaboration and objective measures of positions held. Based on Cattell’s notions of investment and crystallized intelligence, we predicted that (whereas technical-course grades would be driven by technical interests and GRE-quantitative scores) leadership-relevant performances would be driven primarily by human interests and GRE-verbal scores. Results with social-course grades and with perceived and objective leadership support this prediction. Results also elucidate questions and controversies about how demographic attributes--such as female, foreign, finance-industry, financial aid, and age--affect MBA performances, clarifying the scope and mechanisms of effects.