



## Short Communication

# The Big Five's relation with the facets of Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation<sup>☆</sup>



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## ABSTRACT

Recent research suggests that Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) constructs are actually multifaceted. We studied the underlying personality structure of both RWA and SDO by examining their facet correlates with the Big Five personality dimensions. In a sample of 406 participants, Openness and Conscientiousness appear to be the most important personality correlates for all RWA facets, thus supporting findings conducted with the RWA total measure. Unexpectedly, for the two SDO facets and SDO total scale, Openness was the most important correlate, followed by the anticipated significant relation with Agreeableness. The SDO and RWA facets were differentially correlated with the Big Five, suggesting that they may not have the same latent structure. These results suggest that some accuracy may be lost when using only the total RWA and SDO scales and that research should explore the similarity and differences in which the facets correlate and predict other variables.

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Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1988) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) are two psychological constructs that capture individual differences in social attitudes and perspectives of how social environments should operate. RWA reflects a somewhat dogmatic view of the world while SDO reflects preferences for a strong dominant and unequal social system. They have been important to gain a better understanding of prejudice (Sibley & Duckitt, 2008), values, and ideologies (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010). Although the majority of research has treated both RWA and SDO as unitary constructs, recent studies suggest RWA (e.g., Duckitt, Bizumic, Krauss, & Heled, 2010) and SDO (Ho et al., 2012) are multifaceted. Duckitt et al. (2010) labeled the RWA facets as: Authoritarianism (sanctioning the use of punitive and strict means of control), Conservatism (encouraging respect and obedience), and Traditionalism (a deference to traditional values and norms). SDO consists of two facets: supporting group-based dominance (SDO-D) and being against equality (anti-egalitarianism; SDO-E) (Ho et al., 2012). Examination of RWA and SDO at the facet level would provide empirical

evidence for whether each facet is best treated as separate constructs that provide greater interpretability and predictive ability. This study provides additional empirical evidence of the underlying structure of both RWA and SDO facets by examining their correlates with the Big Five personality dimensions.

The dual-process model proposed by Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, and Birum (2002) suggests social cohesion and collective security are the motivational goals of RWA. These goals are influenced by low Openness to Experience and high Conscientiousness personality dimensions. The dual-process model also suggests group-based dominance and superiority are the motivational goals of SDO, which are influenced by the personality dimension of low Agreeableness. A few studies support these suppositions (e.g., Sibley & Duckitt, 2008), however, some variations exist. RWA was found to be significantly positively correlated with Extraversion (Altemeyer, 1996; Cohrs, Kämpfe-Hargrave, & Riemann, 2012; Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004) and SDO significantly negatively correlated with Openness (Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Heaven & Bucci, 2001; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008).

One explanation for these differing results is that the RWA and SDO aggregated scores may hide some important relations with personality. Use of an aggregated RWA or SDO measure may result in reduced predictive accuracy and poorer theoretical understanding of the constructs underlying those aggregated measures (Dudley, Orvis, Lebiecki, & Cortina, 2006; Paunonen & Nicol, 2001).

Some evidence for the differential predictive ability of the SDO facets can be found in the only study examining the partial correlations

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between the Big Five and SDO-D and -E facets, in which Agreeableness was negatively correlated with both SDO-D and SDO-E while Openness was significantly negatively correlated only with SDO-D (Ho et al., 2015). The few studies that have examined the RWA and SDO facets suggest they do not demonstrate similar patterns of correlations with other attitudes (e.g., Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013; Duckitt et al., 2010; Ho et al., 2012; Passini, 2015). Ho et al. (2015) found that SDO-D and SDO-E reflect different forms of attitudes to group based hierarchy and inequality, with the former expressing an aggressive stance on group subordination and the latter a passive approach to inequality. Passini (2015) found RWA Aggression was not related with conformity (thus less inclined to support some social norms) but was related with power and achievement. Passini (2015) suggested that the RWA Submissive person is a latent aggressive individual, passively supporting aggressive actions by endorsing authority figures.

We examined the extent to which the three components of RWA and the two components of SDO are related to the Big Five in comparison with their respective total scale scores. In doing so, we hoped to find support for Duckitt et al.'s (2002) supposition that Openness and Conscientiousness may be the primary personality dimensions of RWA and its facets, while Agreeableness underscores the SDO total score and its facets.

## 1. Method

### 1.1. Participants and procedure

We recruited participants online by advertising our study on two research websites, Psychological Research on the Net and Social Psychology Network. After clicking the study title, participants were directed to Survey Monkey where they provided informed consent, followed by completion of the study measures and demographic information, such as gender, country of residence, and education level. 753 participants registered to complete the study; however, 332 individuals were excluded for failing to complete the study (the majority left the study immediately after indicating consent to proceed with the study). Four additional participants were removed as their scores were more than three standard deviations away from the sample mean on any study measures, and 11 participants were excluded from analyses as they completed the questionnaires in less than 3 min, indicating a lack of engagement with the items. This resulted in a total of 406 participants. The majority of our sample was female ( $n = 314$ , 77.3%), resided in North America ( $n = 327$ , 80.5%), and had completed at least high school ( $n = 236$ , 58.9%). The average age of participants was 23.3 years ( $SD = 9.4$ ).

### 1.2. Measures

#### 1.2.1. Personality

The 50-item International Personality Item Pool (50-Item IPIP; Goldberg, 1999) measures how strongly participants identify with statements assessing the following five personality dimensions: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, and Extraversion. Items are rated from 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate), indicating how truly a participant feels each item reflects their personality. The 50-item IPIP demonstrated good internal consistency; see Table 1 for alpha values.

#### 1.2.2. Right-Wing Authoritarianism

Duckitt et al.'s (2010) Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale measures the extent to which participants report agreeing with authoritarian principles and ideology and is comprised of three facets: Conservatism, Traditionalism, and Authoritarianism. Each facet consists of 6 items, and is scored using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A high Conservatism score indicates a preference for obeying authority, a high Traditionalism score indicates a preference for traditional values, and a high Authoritarianism score indicates a tough stance on criminals and preference for strict implementation of laws. The RWA facets demonstrated good internal consistency, see Table 1.

#### 1.2.3. Social Dominance Orientation

The revised Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO; Ho et al., 2012) measures the degree to which participants report preference for social hierarchy and group dominance (SDO-Dominance) and inequality (SDO-Egalitarianism). Each facet consists of 8 items, which are scored on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A high SDO-D score is interpreted as a strong preference for group dominance while a high SDO-E score is interpreted as a strong preference for inequality. The SDO facets demonstrated strong internal consistency, see Table 1.

## 2. Results

### 2.1. Examination of gender differences

Previous research (e.g., Ho et al., 2015) found men score higher on dominance and inequality than women, therefore, a MANOVA was run to identify if sex differences existed for each of the variables. Overall, while women scored higher on Agreeableness and Neuroticism, men scored higher on all aspects of Social Dominance Orientation (see Table 1 for results).

**Table 1**  
Average scale or facet scores and mean differences between men and women.

Scale (response range) facet	Cronbach's alpha	Total mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		F
			Men	Women	
International personality					
Item pool (1–5)					
Agreeableness	.75	3.72 (0.57)	3.61 (0.59)	3.75 (0.57)	5.59*
Conscientiousness	.86	3.52 (0.73)	3.47 (0.73)	3.54 (0.72)	0.28
Neuroticism	.85	2.78 (0.80)	2.53 (0.77)	2.85 (0.79)	6.60*
Openness	.78	3.65 (0.64)	3.55 (0.73)	3.68 (0.61)	2.64
Extraversion	.86	3.19 (0.78)	3.19 (0.85)	3.20 (0.77)	0.03
Social Dominance Orientation (1–7)	.86	2.84 (0.94)	3.08 (0.96)	2.77 (0.92)	9.40**
Dominance	.76	3.02 (1.05)	3.20 (1.07)	2.96 (1.03)	5.44*
Anti-Egalitarianism	.81	2.66 (1.02)	2.96 (1.05)	2.58 (0.99)	10.62**
Right-Wing Authoritarianism (1–7)	.88	3.74 (1.05)	3.66 (1.04)	3.74 (1.05)	0.42
Conservatism	.76	3.70 (1.19)	3.63 (1.20)	3.70 (1.19)	0.14
Traditionalism	.82	3.55 (1.41)	3.44 (1.39)	3.55 (1.40)	0.01
Authoritarianism	.72	4.08 (1.12)	3.97 (1.02)	4.10 (1.14)	1.68

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

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