

PSY 202 Sample 2

Title: Wise Men Know Best

Section #10

Due Date: Thursday, February 11th

Question/Prompt: It is logical that others see us differently than we see ourselves, and there is research to back this up. Vazire and Carlson indicate that self- and other-ratings capture different aspects of an individual's personality. What does the acronym SOKA stand for, and what are the two trait dimensions in the SOKA model? As shown in Figure 1, what combination of traits produces the least difference between our own and a friend's ratings of our personality? Based on the figure, under what conditions are we most accurate about ourselves? Under what conditions are our friends most accurate about us? Of the three observability/evaluateness clusters in Figure 1, which represents the least accurate personality ratings overall? Recount an experience in which someone close to you offered a surprising description of yourself. Have you come to agree with that assessment or does it still surprise you?

It is a weird concept and slightly hard to imagine that other people may know more about our personality than we ourselves know. Before reading this article I did not believe this, I mean how could someone else know more about me than I do. I thought I'm the one who has been in this mind and body for my whole life, it just doesn't make any sense. While reading this article it started to occur to me how others can actually know more about ourselves than we do and how others can really help us to become better people and to further understand ourselves by simply just talking to others about yourself.

The acronym SOKA stands for self-other knowledge asymmetry which is a model. This model is all about how we understand our personality compared to how others understand our personality. We understand many of our own traits better than other people but in many of our traits others can understand them better than even we can. In the article it says that, "According to this model, the differences between what we know about ourselves and what others know about us are not random but are driven by differences between the information available to the self and others and motivational biases that differentially affect perceptions of the self and others". Knowing how this model works we can learn more about ourselves through talking to other people who understand us better in certain areas and getting past our biases about ourselves.

In this article tests were done to find the Accuracy of Self- and Friend-Ratings for Different Personality Traits. The test looked at different traits associated with the following three categories: Low observability with low evaluativeness, High observability with low evaluativeness, and then Low observability with high evaluativeness. They

tested for the accuracy of how we perceive our own traits and how others perceive our traits. For different types of traits different results were found.

Of the three observability/evaluateness clusters in Figure one, the least accurate personality ratings overall were the traits associated with high observability but low evaluateness. This was also considered to be the least accurate of the observability/evaluateness clusters. The high observability means that people can easily observe the trait out in public like how talkative a person is, you actually can hear a person talk which makes it an external trait. The low evaluateness means that it is hard to determine the value or amount of, so with how talkative a person is it is extremely hard to determine the value or amount of talkativeness a person has. In the article it states that, “others have better information than the self for judging external traits—traits defined primarily by overt behavior, such as being boisterous or charming”, This is why in the data it shows other people being able to more accurately describe a trait of someone than themselves, even though both self and friends are relatively low for this cluster. I believe the accuracy of self for the low observability, high evaluateness is so low because it is very hard to be aware of these types of traits during the day. I know personally I don't keep track of a trait like how much I talk and I believe others are the same way so it can be quite hard for ourselves to accurately be aware of these cluster of traits.

Our friends are most accurate about us under low observability and high evaluateness. this means that this cluster of traits are traits that are hard to observe for others out in public but can be easily put into a value or an amount, an example of a trait like this would be considered as someones intelligence. On the accurate scale

reading the self was plotted at around .17 and friends were plotted at around .32 meaning that friends are much more accurate. In the article it stated that, “when perceiving others on highly evaluative traits, we are able to form impressions that are mostly accurate (assuming we have enough information)”. This is because people are actually able to put a value on these types of traits and this is why on figure one the friends are plotted the highest for this cluster. The reason the self are plotted so low for this cluster is because, “self-perception on highly evaluative traits (e.g., being rude, being intelligent) is severely distorted by biases. As a result, self-ratings on evaluative traits often do not track our actual standing on those traits (but instead might track individual differences in self-esteem or narcissism)”. I believe this is so because if you think about it everyone wants to feel like they are intelligent or they are a good person and have good values. Many people will trick themselves into believing they are these things even when they are not. They will only look for evidence that back up there beliefs and throw out all other evidence. In the article it says that, “there is a motive to maintain and enhance our self worth. There is a great deal of research documenting the lengths people will go to in order to maintain a positive view about themselves”. For example it is almost defeating and deteriorating to feel like you are not intelligent so we do everything we can to make ourselves believe that we are intelligent. In extreme cases, which I do know a few people like this, they feel as if they are better than everybody else and that is just flat out a bias.

For the Low observability, low evaluativeness cluster of traits, self accuracy was plotted at around .35 and friends accuracy was plotted at around .25. An example of a Low observability, low evaluativeness would be considered the trait of something like

anxiety. In the article it was proposed that, “the self has better information than others do for judging internal traits—traits defined primarily by thoughts and feelings, such as being anxious or optimistic”. This does make sense because it is very hard for other people to observe these internal traits and most people do not really show these types of traits very often. It takes someone who is good at reading other people to really be able to see these types of traits in someone else.

One time I had an experience in which my dad offered a surprising description about myself which I never thought about. My dad told me that I always bring a lot of positive energy to places I go and that I can really brighten up a room. I was so surprised by this first of all because it was a huge compliment and very nice of him to say but also because I felt like I was usually pretty tired and I can be a pretty shy guy a lot of times so it was quite a bit different from what I thought about myself. I knew I smiled and tried to make people happy and really cared but I never thought I made much of a difference to others. Further looking at the results from the trait clusters from figure one it is even more surprising to me. This trait that my dad spoke of is a Low observability, low evaluativeness and has self plotted at .35, and friends plotted at .25. This means that I should have been able to know this about myself, but in reality my dad knew more about one of my intrinsic traits than I did which does not happen very often. My dad was actually completely right and recently I have really been able to see the smile I bring to peoples faces and how I positively influence other peoples days. I am very happy that my dad said this to me back then.