

# **The Midlife Development Inventory (MIDI) Personality Scales: Scale Construction and Scoring**

Margie E. Lachman & Suzanne L. Weaver

Technical Report – July 1997

Brandeis University

Psychology Department, MS 062

Waltham, MA 02454-9110

Research supported by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Research Network on Successful Midlife Development (MIDMAC).

The MIDI includes 6 personality trait scales: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness (Communion), and Agency. These traits were measured using self-ratings of 30 adjectives. Most of the adjectives were selected from existing trait lists and inventories (see Bem, 1981; Goldberg, 1992; John, 1990; Trapnell & Wiggins, 1990); a few items were generated by Margie Lachman and Alice Rossi. For each personality dimension, a list of all adjectives appearing in the literature was compiled (John, 1990). The adjectives which appeared most consistently as markers and had the highest item to total correlations or factor loadings were identified. Initially, four adjectives were selected to mark each trait dimension. Given the time constraints for MIDI, the goal was to create the shortest possible set of items to measure personality reliably in less than five 5 minutes by telephone or mail survey.

A pilot study was conducted in 1994 with a probability sample of 1000 men and women between the ages of 30 and 70. Items with the highest item to total correlations and factor loadings were selected from MIDI. Forward regressions were also run to determine the smallest number of items needed to account for over 90% of the total scale variance. Many of the negatively worded items (unemotional, unreliable, unsophisticated, unsympathetic, shy, unsociable) were dropped due to very low variance. New items were added to increase reliabilities on some scales.

Information about the factor loadings, coefficient alpha, item to total correlations and scale means from the MIDUS sample, and the scoring algorithm is contained in this document.

## REFERENCES

- Bem, S. L. (1981). *Bem Sex-Role Inventory Manual*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Goldberg, L. R. (1992). The development of markers for the Big-Five factor structure. *Psychological Assessment, 4*, 26-42.
- John, O. P. (1990). The “Big Five” factor taxonomy: Dimensions of personality in the natural language and in questionnaires. In L.A. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality theory and research*, (pp. 66-100). New York: Guilford.
- Trapnell, P. D., & Wiggins, J. S. (1990). Extension of the Interpersonal Adjective Scales to include the Big Five dimensions of personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*, 781-790

## Research Using MIDI Personality Items

- Mroczek, D., & Kolarz, C. (1998). The effect of age on positive and negative affect: A developmental perspective on happiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 1333-1349.
- Plaut, V., Markus, H., & Lachman, M. (2002). Place matters: Consensual features and regional variation in American well-being and self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 160-184.
- Prenda, K. & Lachman, M. (2001). Planning for the future: A life management strategy for increasing control and life satisfaction in adulthood. *Psychology and Aging*, 16, 206-216.
- Staudinger, U., Fleeson, W., & Baltes, P. (1999). Predictors of subjective physical health and global well-being: Similarities and differences between the United States and Germany. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 305-319.

# **MIDI**

## **The Midlife Development Inventory**

### **Part I Questionnaire**

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Research Network On Successful Midlife Development

4. Please indicate how well each of the following describes you.

	A LOT	SOME	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL
a. Outgoing.....	1	2	3	4
b. Helpful.....	1	2	3	4
c. Moody.....	1	2	3	4
d. Organized.....	1	2	3	4
e. Self-confident.....	1	2	3	4
f. Friendly.....	1	2	3	4
g. Warm.....	1	2	3	4
h. Worrying.....	1	2	3	4
i. Responsible.....	1	2	3	4
j. Forceful.....	1	2	3	4
k. Lively.....	1	2	3	4
l. Caring.....	1	2	3	4
m. Nervous.....	1	2	3	4
n. Creative.....	1	2	3	4
o. Assertive.....	1	2	3	4
p. Hardworking.....	1	2	3	4
q. Imaginative.....	1	2	3	4
r. Softhearted.....	1	2	3	4
s. Calm.....	1	2	3	4
t. Outspoken.....	1	2	3	4
u. Intelligent.....	1	2	3	4
v. Curious.....	1	2	3	4
w. Active.....	1	2	3	4
x. Careless.....	1	2	3	4
y. Broad-minded.....	1	2	3	4
z. Sympathetic.....	1	2	3	4
aa. Talkative.....	1	2	3	4
bb. Sophisticated.....	1	2	3	4
cc. Adventurous.....	1	2	3	4
dd. Dominant.....	1	2	3	4

## Scoring Key for MIDI Personality Trait Scales Part I Questionnaire, Section F4, p.34

1. Naming of items: An “s” prefix was added to all items. (Example: “Outgoing is item f4a and is named sf4a.)
2. Items are reverse scored. An “r” suffix is added to the reversed item. All items are reversed EXCEPT sf4s and sf4x.
3. Scales are computed by finding the mean of the items for cases that have valid values for at least half of the items on the particular scale. System missing values should be assigned for cases with fewer than half the items for the scale. For scoring the personality scales the number in the computer code specifies the minimum number of the items required. For example MEAN .3 signifies for the agency scale at least 3 items should be completed to count the case as non-missing.
4. For all scales, higher values indicate greater endorsement of the construct.

Recode sf4a sf4b sf4c sf4d sf4e sf4f sf4g sf4h sf4i sf4j sf4k sf4l  
 Sf4m sf4n sf4o sf4p sf4q sf4r sf4t sf4u sf4v sf4w sf4y sf4z  
 Sf4aa sf4bb sf4cc sf4dd  
 (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1) into  
 sf4ar sf4br sf4dr sf4er sf4fr sf4gr sf4hr sf4ir sf4jr sf4kr sf4jr  
 sf4mr sf4nr sf4or sf4pr sf4qr sf4rr sf4tr sf4ur sf4vr sf4wr sf4yr  
 sf4zr sf4aar sf4bbr sf4ccr sf4ddr

Compute agency = mean.3(sf4er, sf4jr, sf4or, sf4tr, sf4ddr)  
 Compute agree = mean.3(sf4br, sf4gr, sf4lr sf4rr, sf4zr)  
 Compute open = mean.4(sf4nr, sf4qr, sf4ur, sf4vr, sf4yr, sf4bbr, sf4ccr)  
 Compute neurot = mean.2(sf4cr, sf4hr, sf4mr, sf4s)  
 Compute extrav = mean.3(sf4ar, sf4fr, sf4kr, sf4wr, sf4aar)  
 Compute consc = mean.2 (sf4dr, sf4ir, sf4pr, sf4x)

### Variable labels

agency	‘sf4 agency’
agree	‘sf4 agreeableness’
neurot	‘sf4 neuroticism’
open	‘sf4 openness to experience’
consc	‘sf4 conscientiousness’
extrav	‘sf4 extraversion’

**MIDI PERSONALITY SCALES**  
**Item-to-Total Correlations, Factor Loadings, and**  
**Descriptive Statistics (Based on MIDUS RDD sample)**

<u>AGENCY</u>	Item to Total	Factor Loadings
E. Self-confident	.44	.40
J. Forceful	.62	.67
O. Assertive	.66	.61
T. Outspoken	.56	.64
DD. Dominant	.60	.72

Alpha = .79      Mean = 2.73      SD = .66      Range = 1-4

<u>AGREEABLENESS</u>	Item to Total	Factor Loadings
B. Helpful	.52	.42
G. Warm	.61	.58
L. Caring	.67	.63
R. Softhearted	.52	.57
Z. Sympathetic	.58	.72

Alpha = .80      Mean = 3.49      SD = .48      Range = 1-4

<u>OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE</u>	Item to Total	Factor Loadings
N. Creative	.55	.73
Q. Imaginative	.61	.77
U. Intelligent	.47	.34
V. Curious	.55	.46
Y. Broadminded	.36	.28
BB. Sophisticated	.45	.31
CC. Adventurous	.50	.40

Alpha = .77      Mean = 3.04      SD = .52      Range = 1.14-4

<u>NEUROTICISM</u>	Item to Total	Factor Loadings
C. Moody	.47	.55
H. Worrying	.63	.78
M. Nervous	.64	.77
S. Calm (-)	.42	-.50

Alpha = .74      Mean = 2.25      SD = .66      Range = 1-4

---



EXTRAVERSION

		Item to Total	Factor Loadings
A.	Outgoing	.65	.62
F.	Friendly	.54	.58
K.	Lively	.67	.62
W.	Active	.45	.34
AA.	Talkative	.51	.46
Alpha = .78		Mean = 3.20	SD = .57
			Range = 1-4

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

		Item to Total	Factor Loadings
D.	Organized	.40	.52
I.	Responsible	.47	.65
P.	Hardworking	.35	.48
X.	Careless (-)	.28	-.38
Alpha = .58		Mean = 3.41	SD = .45
			Range = 1-4

---