

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Detecting Feigning in Adolescents on the Personality Assessment Inventory – Adolescent Form.

STUDENT: Steven Malm

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: Teachers College

DATE: July 2016

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Problem: Psychological evaluations are susceptible to clients feigning the existence of psychopathological symptoms. Much of the research on identifying feigning in psychological assessment has focused on adults despite the idea that adolescents are also capable of deception. The purpose of the present study is to expand the limited literature base on detecting feigning in adolescents when administered the Personality Assessment Inventory – Adolescent (PAI-A).

Participants: The current study included 114 nonclinical adolescents (ages 15 to 18) recruited from high schools in central Illinois and Indiana as well as 50 randomly-selected individuals with a depression diagnosis from the clinical standardization set of the PAI-A. Sample demographics included a mean age of 16.64 years; 51.2% young men, 48.2% young women; 85.4% Caucasian, 6.7% African American, 5.5% Hispanic, and 2.4% Asian. **Design:** Participants were randomly assigned to experimental groups: honest nonclinical, uncoached feigning, and coached feigning. The clinical individuals made up the honest clinical group. Participants completed the PAI-A under their respective experimental condition. **Results:** 87% of feigning profiles were able to show clinical levels of depression on the PAI-A. MANOVA and multinomial regression showed strong support for the Rogers Discriminant Function (RDF; d range = 1.85 - 2.05). The Negative

Impression Management (NIM) scale also showed some promise (d range = 0.77 – 1.08) but was less useful than the RDF. Finally, little support was found for the MAL (d range = 0.58 – 0.70).

Conclusion: The negative distortion indices, particularly the RDF and NIM, showed good utility in differentiating between groups. Cut-scores and implications for practice – such as the need to calculate the RDF when feigning is a risk and how to proceed once feigning is discovered - are discussed.