

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DESIRABILITY  
IN STRUCTURED AND NARRATIVE  
SELF-REPORT DURING THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC

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This research addressed the key question: Does social desirability operate as a validity confound by adding irrelevant variance to self-reports and narratives, or does it serve as a valuable source of information on how individuals choose to adapt. This study used three conceptualizations of social desirability (the Marlowe-Crowne need for approval, and impression management and self-deception from the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) and investigated their respective relations with self-reports of positive and negative paradigms (e.g. stress and coping, negative and positive affect). Each of these conceptualizations was also related to narrative-based locus of control and coping. The sample comprised 177 U.S. teachers who completed surveys during January-April 2021, in the beginning of the transition back to in-person learning from COVID. Results indicated that social desirability did not operate as a validity confound, and that it served as a valuable source of information of respondents' personal values in how it influenced the relations among self-reports and coded narratives.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL DESIRABILITY IN STRUCTURED AND NARRATIVE  
SELF-REPORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

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## Dedication

To Sean, my light and love. Thank you.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Social desirability and its relations to self and narrative ratings of stress and coping offered a distinct opportunity to explore the concept of self-presentation as adaptive or as a validity confound during the uncertainty and social upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic. While social desirability was originally conceived of as a presentation bias to self-reports, there have been multiple perspectives exploring its adaptiveness in the subsequent literature. Initially, social desirability was reported as a validity nuisance in self-reported personality assessments, where individuals inflated their endorsements of their own positive characteristics (Ellis, 1946). However, Ellis (1946) did offer an alternative perspective on social desirability in his research as well: that the inflation of responses could give researchers and psychologists helpful clinical information about the respondent. This more adaptive perspective has been the focus of more recent research, which has shifted from the traditional bias perspective to more of an analysis of social desirability in relation to self-reported personality characteristics and coping (see review, Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016; Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002).

The central question surrounding social desirability in the current study related to the idea of measurement invariance. Was social desirability in the current study more of an individual characteristic, akin to a personality trait, making it a valuable source of information on the respondent, or was social desirability in the current study a property of the measurement method used that was independent of the respondent, making it a bias? Measurement invariance “requires one to distinguish between characteristics of the person that are the ‘focus’ of the measure, and those characteristics that are irrelevant to this focus” (Millsap, 2007, p. 462). If social desirability was a characteristic of the respondent then it, by definition, could not be a bias in measurement, “because there is no clear definition of characteristics [of the individual] that

are irrelevant to the focus of the test” (Millsap, 2007, p. 462). This study sought to examine patterns of self-report correlates with three conceptualizations of social desirability in comparison with narratives. The narrative comparison allowed for a deeper understanding of how socially desirable responding related to actual behavior from the participants in this study. As the study was anonymous, there was less motivation to “fake good” on measures, as teachers were not identified. This offered the opportunity to explore social desirability in a context that did not necessarily probe for socially desirable responses. Therefore, this study examined specific relations hypothesized as supportive of the definition of social desirability as a bias, or as adaptive in the context of teaching during the pandemic.

The core debate in the conceptualization of social desirability has centered around the bias perspective: where social desirability was either a one-factor need for approval (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) or a two-factor paradigm comprised of impression management and self-deception (Paulhus, 1984). The bias perspective was inherently negative, and its conceptualizations focused on the role of deception, both conscious and unconscious, for self-serving purposes. Crowne and Marlowe posited that individuals high in social desirability would deceive others for social approval, while Paulhus posited that individuals high in impression management would consciously deceive others, and individuals high in self-deception would unconsciously deceive themselves (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1984). The bias perspective did not critically scrutinize the reasoning behind socially desirable responding, leaving gaps in the literature where social desirability appeared to function more adaptively (Travis, 2020). Several studies have found positive relations between measures of social desirability and measures of well-being, where reports from significant others confirmed these self-report results, contradicting the bias perspective (Kozma & Stones, 1987; Lane, Merikangas,

Schwartz, Huang, & Prusoff, 1990). In addition, research has indicated that social desirability was related to some desirable traits (e.g. agreeableness) but not all desirable traits (e.g. extraversion), indicating that social desirability may function more as an aspect of personality that impacts social and public functioning, as opposed to a bias (Uziel, 2010). Importantly, “the value of informants’ reports lies in their considerable experiences with observing clients’ concerns as they manifest in their social environments. These social environments also include characteristics relevant to understanding clients’ concerns” (De Los Reyes & Makol, 2021, p. 4). The bias perspective does not offer a complete representation of the results seen in social desirability and other informant research. Consideration of patterns that supported an adaptive perspective presented an opportunity to understand the deeper relations between social desirability and self and narrative-reports.

Social desirability may not be a source of bias in self-report, but instead a lens through which individuals are able to navigate their social worlds. This lens may be particularly salient in more public-facing professions like teaching. As teachers have had to navigate across multiple social roles and contexts, social desirability offered a perspective to understand how teachers were meeting their social and self-presentation needs in the school environment. This study investigated this social desirability perspective in a high-stress context: the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conditions of teaching changed drastically, and there was increasing public pressure related to teachers’ desire to return to in-person learning. Within this discourse, the question emerged: what is the role of social desirability as a form of self-presentation during a high stress, yet anonymous context? Additionally, would social desirability present as a bias or as adaptive, based on personal narrative reflections, given this context? A traditional method of other-report was not available given the scope of this study, so coded narratives were used as a

proxy for another informant. Historically, multiple informants have had relatively low levels of convergence (Makol et. al., 2020). In this study, utilizing the respondents' own narratives as the other-report and coded ratings as another informant, the construct of social desirability in self-reports was further explored by comparing quantitative self-ratings (which could be subject to bias) and qualitative other-ratings (which were less likely to be subject to bias).

The pandemic has altered both individual and collective social and life experience, with education being significantly impacted. At the time this study was conducted, January to April 2021, some schools were beginning to go back in person for the first time since March 2020, others had been engaging in forms of hybrid learning using both remote and in-person teaching. The limited research referencing social desirability during the COVID-19 pandemic focused on the bias perspective in self-reports, many discussing hygiene practices like self-reports of handwashing during the pandemic, where individuals who were publicly questioned on their habits reported higher levels of handwashing than those in an anonymous condition (Galasso, Pons, Profeta, Becher, Brouard, & Foucault, 2020; Li, Kao, Shieh, Chou, & Lo, 2020; Mieth, Mayer, Hoffmann, Buchner, & Bell, 2021). These studies referenced the pull to present desirably, without necessarily the adaptive community-oriented mindedness, consistent with the bias perspective. In addition, the lack of studies on social desirability during the pandemic left a hole in the literature as to how social desirability may function in a time of social disruption. It was important to consider what the purpose of self-presentation was during a crisis, particularly in the context of trying to provide stability for others, the way teachers did for their students. Convergence of self and narrative reports “may reflect meaningful consistencies in displays of behaviors across contexts. .... this may be a marker for higher severity and functional

impairment, indicating that problems are more pervasive, consistent, and observable” (Makol, De Los Reyes, Ostrander, & Reynolds, 2019, p. 1678).

To further understand the variability among respondents’ report patterns, it was important to synthesize several sources including the context of the informant, the perspective of the informant, and traits of the informant that may appear across both perspective and context (Makol, et. al., 2020). The context of the pandemic lent clarity to the construct of social desirability because of the disruption to normal day-to-day life and social interactions. As social desirability had typically been investigated in a public versus private social context, the pandemic offered an interruption to the typical context of self-reported functioning and emotions, allowing for further investigation into the concept of a desire for a certain self-presentation, and how that was reflected in self and narrative-based reports. This study aimed to address whether social desirability added irrelevant variance to self and narrative-report measures or gave information on how individuals adapted, using measurement validity (as seen in the comparison of self and narrative-based reports) as a diagnostic of the validity of participants’ self-presentation.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the construct of social desirability as potentially adaptive when considered in relation to context-specific coping, stress reactivity, affect, and situational appraisals of teaching activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study built on previous research hypothesizing social desirability as an adaptive motivation to social evaluation, as opposed to as a biasing factor that diminished the validity of self-report measures. An adaptive motivation to social evaluation re-conceptualized social desirability as something rooted in social competence and relationships as opposed to a form of deception,

designed to acquire social approval (Travis, 2020). This review appraised the relationships between social desirability and personality, coping, and professional circumstances to illuminate the role of social desirability in self-report measures, as well as the different patterns of associations between social desirability, quantitative self-reports of coping and stress, and qualitative reports of experiences. This segment also reviewed the two main measurements of social desirability, both of which were used in the current study: the Marlowe-Crowne Scale (MC) and Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR), and how these two conceptualizations of social desirability related differentially to personality constructs, emotions, and professional satisfaction with respect to their conceptual bases. This review clarified gaps in the previous literature and explained how they were addressed in the current research and provided additional background research justifying the redefinition of social desirability as an adaptive motivation to social evaluation.

### **Previous Definitions of Social Desirability and Their Measurement**

Social desirability originally emerged in personality research as an explanation for participants' magnification of positive traits in self-reports (Ellis, 1946). The first definition of social desirability came from Albert Ellis, who described it as a "self-halo effect" or a "general over-estimation" that influenced the validity of personality measures based on the cultural values an individual deemed desirable in their inventory responses (Ellis, 1946, p. 386). Importantly, Ellis also believed that, in addition to cultural influences, the internal motivations for inflating responses may also have clinical implications (Ellis, 1946). As the conceptualization of social desirability as a bias has permeated subsequent definitions, Ellis's more clinical ideas in the original conceptualization have been lost in later research. Since Ellis's original characterization, there have been a myriad of definitions of social desirability, with two in particular enduring

over the last several decades, both intending to represent the bias perspective: The Marlowe-Crowne definition and the Paulhus definition.

Crowne and Marlowe were concerned with previous perceptions of social desirability as a statistical deviance in personality assessments and sought to redefine the construct with a new scale to measure it (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The previous conceptualization of social desirability, the Edwards Scale, had been drawn from the Lie Scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), resulting in a scale with inherent connections to psychopathology (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Edwards, 1957). Crowne and Marlowe decided to divorce social desirability from psychopathology, in order to provide a more accurate measurement of social desirability in personality tests and other psychological reports (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Crowne and Marlowe consulted personality inventories to pull items that met their criteria for cultural approval and minimized pathological implications (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The Marlowe-Crowne Scale was developed as a more wholistic scale of social desirability, designed to investigate what the authors deemed a single-factor construct: an overall need for approval (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

The internal consistency of the Marlowe-Crowne scale varied across previous research, indicating that the scale may not measure what it is purported to measure under its main conceptualization. The original Marlowe-Crowne scale consisted of 33 True or False items, with an internal consistency of .88, which was relatively strong, using the Kuder-Richardson formula (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). In previous studies, the Marlowe-Crowne scale has also been reported to have internal consistencies of .77 (Neuberg & Newsom, 1993), approximately .80, and .66 (see review, Beretvas et. al., 2002) depending on the sample assessed. The wide variation between these different studies intimated that social desirability, as measured by the Marlowe-

Crowne scale, was not as straightforward as simply a biasing need for approval. In addition, while Crowne and Marlowe sought to minimize the pathological implications of the Edwards scale, their scale was still significantly correlated to both the Edwards Scale ( $r=.35, p<.01$ ) and the MMPI Lie Scale ( $r=.54, p<.01$ ) that the Edwards Scale was based on, indicating that there may have been a predetermined relationship between the Marlowe-Crowne conceptualization and psychopathology. Of the two main social desirability definitions, Crowne and Marlowe offered a more wide-ranging description of social desirability, as an overall need for approval (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). However, that definition did not illuminate the motivations and relationships that underlied socially desirable response patterns.

In the 1980s, Delroy Paulhus aimed to create a new two-factor scale of social desirability to evaluate the dual dimensions of the construct, firstly by confirming the two factors, and then by investigating the impact of instructions on socially desirable responses (Paulhus, 1984). Previous research had concluded that attribution and denial represented a single construct as opposed to two factors, and that other social desirability conceptualizations had typically clustered around two factors: usually called Alpha and Gamma (Paulhus, 1984). Furthermore, previous research had partitioned social desirability as self-deception, where an individual believes their distorted report, and impression management, where the individual consciously distorts their self-report (with the Gamma factor representing self-deception, and the Alpha factor representing impression management) (Paulhus, 1984). Paulhus named his scale the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) (Paulhus, 1984).

The BIDR's two-factor model has shown a better fit than the one-factor Marlowe-Crowne scale in some, but not all, of the social desirability literature since its inception. Paulhus, through his research, found a, "reliable distinction between self-deception and impression



management” (Paulhus, 1984, p. 606). Paulhus emphasized that the self-deception factor was unconscious because responses in his study were not significantly influenced by context manipulation, indicating that an individual engaging in self-deception is not actively constructing their responses to external stimuli, the way an individual engaging in impression management would be (Paulhus, 1984). This distinction was crucial in the current study, particularly related to locus of control, which will be discussed later in the current review. The internal consistency for both factors ranged between .68 and .86, which was consistent with the ranges found for the one-factor Marlowe-Crowne Scale in previous research (Paulhus, 1984). Subsequent studies have found mixed results for the factorial dimensions of social desirability.

A 2007 study found that both impression management and self-deception were acceptable evaluations of their respective concepts, and of social desirability in undergraduates and with forensic clients who had a history of either criminal offenses or personal injury claims with physical injuries (Lanyon & Carle, 2007). Another study used confirmatory factor analysis with the Marlowe-Crowne Scale to analyze whether a two-factor model was a better fit for their undergraduate sample datum than a one-factor model. (Loo & Loewen, 2004). The authors found that the BIDR was a better fit than both the Marlowe-Crowne and Edwards scales, due to the lower reliability of the Marlowe-Crowne Scale (Loo & Loewen, 2004). Another confirmatory factor analysis comparing the Marlowe-Crowne Scale and the BIDR found that while the BIDR’s two-factor model was a better fit for their datum, there were gender differences in the appropriateness of fit between the one-factor and two-factor models (Ventimiglia & MacDonald, 2012). For men, there was mixed support for the one factor model, but for women, there was reasonably good support for the one-factor model (Ventimiglia & MacDonald, 2012). Another confirmatory factor analysis of the BIDR and Marlowe-Crowne Scale using 394 undergraduate

and graduate students found that neither the one nor two-factor models were a good fit (Leite & Beretvas, 2005). Overall, there have been mixed results on the goodness of fit of the two-factor model, lending further support for the need to disentangle the social desirability construct across definitions.

There are two methods of scoring available for the BIDR: dichotomous and continuous. Dichotomous scoring involves conceptualizing of the scores as true or false, and only giving a point to extreme responses (Leite & Beretvas, 2005). Scores of 1-5 would be considered false, and scores of 6-7 would be considered true (Cervellione, Lee, Bonanno, 2009). Continuous scoring has shown higher Cronbach alphas than dichotomous scores, better fit with an undergraduate sample, as well as higher convergent correlations with other social desirability measures, more consistent effects with faking good and faking bad instructions, and larger correlations with personality dimensions (Cervellione, Lee, Bonanno, 2009; Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002). The authors reported that Paulhus recommended dichotomous scoring as the optimal method, but many studies have opted to use continuous scoring instead (Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002). The current study used continuous scoring for the short form of the BIDR used.

The Marlowe-Crowne scale and the BIDR show conceptual overlap, despite their factorial differences. In his original study to develop the BIDR, Paulhus found that the Marlowe-Crowne scale loaded highly on both the impression management and self-deception factors (Paulhus, 1984). Paulhus also found that the Marlowe-Crowne was significantly affected by the context of the administration instructions, with Marlowe-Crowne Scale scores greatly decreasing in an anonymous condition versus a public condition where respondents wrote their name on their response sets (Paulhus, 1984). While this result does testify to response altering in a public context, it did bring the idea of social desirability as a bias into question. If social desirability is

primarily about cultivating a positive public impression with others' opinions of an individual at stake, then it was expected that individuals would alter their responses to make themselves appear more favorably, particularly when they were in a public situation where there could be social judgment. However, if social desirability were adaptive, then the choice to deflate social desirability scores, as to not appear to be faking, demonstrates a potentially deeper social understanding of context, perhaps depending on the measurement instrument as well. The impression management subscale of the BIDR also significantly decreased in the anonymous condition versus the public condition, while the self-deception score did not change substantially, fitting in with the overall hypothesis of the BIDR, that impression management is a conscious act, and self-deception is unconscious in respondents (Paulhus, 1984). In some studies, Marlowe-Crowne has been slightly more highly correlated with the Impression Management subscale than the Self-Deception subscale of the BIDR (Furnham, Petrides, Spencer-Bowdage, 2002), or mapped onto the same factor as Impression Management, but not Self-Deception (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). In a review of the BIDR, it was found that Impression Management scores had high concurrent validity with the Marlowe-Crowne scale specifically (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016). While Paulhus did not discount the Marlowe-Crowne in his research, he did state that need for approval behavior may require both impression management and self-deception, and that the best way to measure these with a one-factor scale would be to create a "multiplicative combination of the two components" (Paulhus, 1984, p. 606). Research goes back and forth on whether a one-factor or two-factor model is a better measurement of social desirability, however, both the Paulhus and Marlowe-Crowne models conceptualize social desirability as inherently negative and a form of deception, which is not fully demonstrated in the literature.

### *Issues of Measurement with Social Desirability in this Research*

Treating social desirability as simply faking or a nuisance to validity muddles the true motivation behind socially desirable responding, especially given that, when scored dichotomously, social desirability scales can be quite rigid. The Marlowe-Crowne scale is true/false, and the BIDR can also be scored in a true/false manner to mimic the Marlowe-Crowne scoring (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1984). Due to the dichotomous scoring method, participants in social desirability studies may not be responding to the exact question being asked, but to the overall schema (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1992). For example, one question on the Marlowe-Crowne scale states, “no matter who I’m talking to, I’m always a good listener” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, p. 351). Someone who feels as though they listen to others most of the time may endorse this as true, because it fits in with how they perceive themselves to be. Particularly for teachers, who as this review will show, value their professional relationships within the school and their perceived status outside of it very highly, responding in a desirable manner may fit with who they perceive themselves to be professionally, as opposed to how they respond precisely to every situation (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1992; Travis, 2020). So, they may endorse items that fit in with their professional schema most of the time, as opposed to interpreting the question as truly asking for every instance.

Another issue of social desirability measurement in this study is its relationship to locus of control. Past research on social desirability and locus of control has focused mainly on scale development of locus of control measurements. A key issue with locus of control measurement and social desirability is that self-report has been the primary approach of relating the two constructs. In the past, social desirability has been evaluated in locus of control measures to minimize the perceived desirability of one orientation over the other (Kestenbaum, 1976). An

internal orientation, where an individual believes they have control over events, has been rated as more desirable than an external orientation, where an individual believes that outside forces have control over events (Kestenbaum, 1976). Therefore, under a bias perspective, individuals with higher social desirability would likely rate themselves as having an internal orientation, as is desirable, when they may actually be operating from an external orientation. Thus, having narrative-based locus of control, rated by researchers based on the self-reported narratives, may offer a new perspective on the relationship between social desirability and locus of control, as this is an area where further research is needed. The bias view of social desirability pertains to its distorting role in self-reports, where social desirability is classified as either explicit faking, in the case of need for approval or impression management, or implicit in the case of self-deception. The open-ended nature of the questions in the current study may have made faking more difficult, since respondents did not know that the question was probing for locus of control. If social desirability (as self-rated impression management/need for approval) was adaptive, then it was expected that there would be increased correlations with a more autonomous, self-directed response to the COVID context, as seen with higher narrative-based internal locus of control. Self-rated coping competence also offered an analogue to the qualitative narrative-based ratings, as narratives were also coded for narrative-based coping in addition to narrative-based locus of control. Narrative-based coping was coded on a spectrum of adaptiveness based on the level of distress implicit in the narratives. By using narrative coding, any potential bias in the self-reports could be evaluated in the context of the narratives, using different conceptualizations of social desirability and fortifying the qualitative narrative-based ratings of locus of control as well, as it would be expected that those with internal locus of control would also rate themselves highly on coping competence.

Another measurement concern in social desirability research pertains to the validity of self-ratings of well-being. Under the bias perspective, self-ratings of well-being would be expected to be falsely inflated. Utilizing qualitative narrative-based rating was one method of further investigating the overlap between concepts measured with self-reports and narratives. If self-reports and narratives were related, it would indicate that there is some degree of congruence between respondents' self-presentation and coded implicit narratives. Self-reports and narratives were distinct with respect to conceptualizing relations with social desirability, however, even a low but significant correlation may mean that there is congruence between self-presentation and narratives. For example, one method of evaluating the relationship between well-being and social desirability is locus of control. An external locus of control has been related to higher levels of depression, work stress and overall psychological distress because of the lack of feelings of agency in one's life (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). Thus, in the current study it was expected that narrative-based external locus of control could be related to self-report constructs like negative affect and perceived stress reactivity. Locus of control orientation is also mutable and can change along with life circumstances (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). Given the experience of the pandemic, an external locus of control, even temporarily, may be associated with more negative feelings and experiences in a sample of teachers, whose careers were heavily impacted by the pandemic. In times of organizational change, workers with an internal locus of control have been found to have higher levels of job satisfaction, as well as behavioral alterations to accommodate new circumstances, which related to the current study in relation to both social desirability and narrative-based locus of control and coping (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). Under the bias perspective, it would be expected that ratings of self-rated affect would be inconsistent with the narrative codes (e.g. self-rated positive affect being positively related to ratings of narrative

distress). This is a unique perspective that this study can bring to the literature, with this rating of locus of control differing from generic self-reports because the perspective is specific to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. This perspective also allowed for further comparison between the conceptualizations of social desirability as bias versus adaptive by allowing for the evaluation of self-rated quantitative datum alongside narrative-based qualitative data. This research also utilized measures of self-rated coping, as internal locus of control has also been associated with self-rated coping. As the current study had both quantitative and qualitative measures of coping, using the narrative ratings of locus of control also offered a perspective on self-rated coping and other-rated locus of control, as well as other-rated coping and other-rated locus of control. The current study used qualitative coding of responses to investigate other-rated locus of control and coping, as well as a quantitative measure of self-rated coping competence to address measurement concerns.

### **Social Desirability and Faking**

Social desirability under the bias perspective has been conceptualized as a kind of faking: either faking good for social approval or faking bad when one wants to receive services or treatment (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), however the deliberateness of faking has been a source of debate. Marlowe and Crowne found that there was a positive correlation between the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the paranoia scales of the MMPI, indicating that high need for approval was associated with suspiciousness about others' motives (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Under the bias perspective, this result would be associated with mistrust of others, and that mistrust serving as a motivation for faking. Paulhus viewed this need for approval as two-pronged, deliberate (impression management) and unconscious (self-deception). Paulhus' model focuses on the broader idea of deception, but only the impression management factor in his conceptualization is

considered deliberate faking (Paulhus,1984). The role of intentionality, whether respondents intend to be deceptive or deception occurs outside of their own awareness, in social desirability raises further questions in the main conceptualizations of social desirability, that are currently still in debate.

One method of detecting deliberate faking involves instructional manipulation. Studies have manipulated instructions to track how social desirability changes between standard and faking directions. In a comparison of the Marlowe-Crowne and BIDR scales, one study of college students found that the Marlowe-Crowne scale outperformed the Impression Management subscale of the BIDR at identifying individuals who were faking, both positively and negatively (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016). Over three studies, groups of participants were randomly assigned to complete measures under standard instructions, or fake answers to either maximize or minimize one's chances of receiving a job (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016). In this study faking was defined as a deliberate misrepresentation, as opposed to the unintentional faking of Paulhus's idea of self-deception (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016). However, the authors do make a critical distinction in their work. While social desirability has often been used as a proxy for faking, research has indicated that social desirability and faking may be different, but related, constructs. Faking has had different effects depending on moderating factors depending on elements like selection ratio for job applicants, while social desirability is presumed to have a universal faking good or faking bad effect (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016).

Another method of detecting deliberate socially desirable responding is the double rating method of social desirability. The double-rating method posits that socially desirable responding satisfies the psychological desire to maintain a positive image in the eyes of both self and others



(Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). As long as this maintenance occurs, individuals should be willing to be honest, if those attitudes are considered more prevalent in society (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). The double rating method used a pre-assessment activity that asks respondents to answer questions the way they think others would answer them about themselves (Hui, 2001). As socially desirable responding would theoretically be minimized, it was expected that there would not be a significant difference between self and other ratings on the social desirability measure (Hui, 2001). Individuals were expected to respond similarly to how they perceived others would respond. However, if self-deception were operating, it could, based on Hui's theory, impact both self and other ratings. Hui's hypothesis assumes intentionality in faking behaviors, and the author emphasized that the double-rating method allows individuals to consider honest responses as well as assumptions of the overall attitudes of others (Hui, 2001). Using the Marlowe-Crowne scale, Hui found that individuals who completed the pre-assessment activity were more likely to consider others' responses to questions and respond more honestly, with honesty being considered in alignment with other-ratings (Hui, 2001). Hui's perspective assumes great honesty on the part of the respondent, though there are other lenses from which to view these results. Respondents may view their ideas of others' ratings as normative, implying not greater honesty, but an avoidance of being perceived as faking. Hui stated that if the double-rating method did indeed decrease socially desirable responding, correlations between self-report scales and social desirability scores in the double-rating method should be lower than scores in the single-rating method, and that there would be a positive correlation between self and other socially desirable responses (Hui, 2001). Hui found that participants who had been given the double rating task scored significantly lower than those given standard instructions, and participants who believed others would respond favorably to an item also responded favorably to

that item, increasing their correlations with the other-rated measures (Hui, 2001). If these results do imply an avoidance of faking as opposed to true honesty, this would support the idea of social desirability as an adaptive motivation to social evaluation. If avoiding negative perceptions is perceived as more honest, that may be socially adaptive, particularly in public situations like teaching. As teachers are frequently evaluated and observed, adjusting social responses to appear more honestly in the eyes of others is an adaptive method of dealing with the pressures of the profession. Hui's results support the idea that social desirability is interpersonally motivated, and that responding comes from an internal desire to take initiative in social situations.

Thomas, Grawitch, and Scandell sought to replicate Hui's results using both the BIDR and the Marlowe-Crowne scale. Using university students, the authors utilized either a single-rating condition or double-rating condition with the Marlowe-Crowne or the BIDR, the authors found that the results confirmed and expanded Hui's original results (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). For the Marlowe-Crowne scale, individuals in the single-rating condition had higher scores than individuals in the double-rating method, and in the double rating method there was a positive correlation between responses for self and responses for others (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). After using a Bonferroni correction, the authors found that a smaller subset of items demonstrated a statistically significant difference between self and other scores, which brought into question Hui's explanation for why the double-rating method worked to lower socially desirable responding (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). For the BIDR, the results matched the Marlowe-Crowne, with the exception of the significant difference between the self and other scores (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). This lack of a significant difference between self and other scores actually supported Hui's interpretation for why the double rating method is effective more fully, as the double-rating method is hypothesized to

enhance honesty with the reminder that others also hold socially undesirable attitudes, therefore lowering the psychological threat of being alone in one's beliefs (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). If individuals are conforming to how they believe others represent themselves, they are still willing to endorse undesirable beliefs, as long as they are not alone in those beliefs. If social desirability were a bias, it would be expected that individuals would want to "fake good" and appear more positively, regardless of how others are portraying themselves. These results may indicate that while the Marlowe-Crowne Scale and BIDR may impact self-report results in similar ways, the mechanism by which they impact self-reports is different because of the response formats (true/false versus a Likert scale) or the other self-report constructs the two scales are associated with (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). In addition, the Marlowe-Crowne scale is positively associated with ignoring the negative while the BIDR is positively associated with over-emphasizing the positive (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). Under the bias perspective, these self-serving predispositions lead individuals to rate themselves more favorably on positive dimensions, but more negatively on ambiguous dimensions (Thomas, Grawitch, & Scandell, 2007). These results were particularly salient for the current study, as the qualitative questions used were open-ended, allowing for an analysis of any discrepancy between quantitative measures of coping and stress and the qualitative ratings.

### **Social Desirability and Personality**

Other authors have sought to expand definitions of social desirability in personality assessment. While the validity of social desirability scales have often been called into question (Lanyon & Carle, 2007; Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002), some researchers have hypothesized that social desirability may reflect a dimension of personality, as opposed to a response bias (Uziel, 2010). Different dimensions of social desirability have mapped onto a myriad of personality

traits (Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002). In contrast to being a bias, social desirability may expose deeper portions of an individual's personality, offering a more nuanced interpretation of the motivations behind socially desirable responding. From this perspective, social desirability may or may not be adaptive, depending on the context, as it is aligned with other personality dimensions.

Past studies have shown that impression management did not change the correlations between self and other reports (McCrae & Costa, 1983), and did not moderate criterion validity in personality scales (Li & Bagger, 2006), indicating that social desirability was not a biasing factor in this research. Social desirability did not predict performance or change the relationship between measures of personality and measures of performance, regardless of conceptualization (Li & Bagger, 2006). Specifically, the authors found no differences in their results related to the operationalization of social desirability as impression management and self-deception (Li & Bagger, 2006). This indicates that personality and social desirability may have similar underlying processes, meaning that social desirability is not strictly a bias.

To further parse out the relations between social desirability, conceptualized as impression management, and personality dimensions, one author reviewed studies across various fields to determine whether social desirability reflected defensiveness or adjustment (Uziel, 2010). Defensiveness was conceptualized as accentuating socially undesirable virtues, due to distorted thoughts related to social rejection and a desire to avoid negative social situations, while adjustment was conceptualized as accentuating desirable virtues (Uziel, 2010). Based on previous research, Uziel determined that if impression management was deceptive, it would add baseless variance to self-reports, and suppress the actual correlations between self and other reports (Uziel, 2010). Uziel found that associations between social desirability and interpersonal

personality traits had correlations between  $-.08$  and  $.58$  for agreeableness, and correlations between  $-.30$  and  $.20$ , were found for extraversion, which is a desirable trait (Uziel, 2010). Extraversion has not been found to relate to high-quality teaching or to motivating students to perform better academically (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). Uziel concluded that impression management “reflects interpersonal sensitivity of some sort, such that the behavior of individuals with a high score on IM scales changes in social context” (Uziel, 2010, p. 248). This was evident in the range of scores for interpersonally desirable traits such as agreeableness and extraversion. Scores changed with social context, consistent with the adaptive perspective, and, particularly for extraversion, there is not a clear positive link with social desirability, even if it is considered particularly desirable in public-facing profession. Adjustment was further described as low negative affect, high emotional stability, as well as a commitment to social harmony to do what is positive for the whole community (Uziel, 2010). The adjustment perspective is consistent with the adaptive view of the current study. Ultimately, Uziel determined that the studies reviewed demonstrated that impression management signals sensitivity to social situations and a craving for interpersonal self-control (Uziel, 2010). To Uziel, the idea of self-deception would be theoretically consistent with defensiveness, while coping would be theoretically consistent with adjustment.

Another method of disentangling social desirability from personality traits is through consensual validity ratings between self and others on personality inventories. Consensual validity occurs when individuals and their peers (i.e. friends or spouses) rate personality traits (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). With consensual validity, there are generally increased levels of consensus related to how much information the rater has about the person they are rating, and previous research has found that socially desirable responding tends to decrease consensual

validity between self and other raters on trait measures (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). The authors explored the role of social desirability in two ways: as a bias (moderator variable) or as a loss of information (suppressor variable) (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). To investigate the impact of socially desirable responding on the consensual validity of self and other-reported personality traits, researchers asked university students to complete questionnaires, including the BIDR and the Social Desirability Index, as a prospective job applicant or honestly (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). Overall, participants in the job applicant condition reported themselves to be less neurotic and more conscientious, agreeable, and extraverted than participants in the honest condition, consistent with the adaptive perspective of the current study (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). Controlling for social desirability scales caused significant decreases in self and other agreement in this study, indicating that even when the personality factors were changed by condition, social desirability did not impact the criterion validity of the other measures used in the study (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). There was also substantial self-peer agreement across the social desirability measures used in the honest condition (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). The BIDR was a suppressor variable for neuroticism, indicating that the BIDR minimized the neuroticism scores, but not the other 4 factors (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). This result is significant because the BIDR only reduced self-reports of a negative construct (neuroticism) but did not emphasize positive self-presentation, indicating that, in this study, social desirability as a bias did not influence participants to appear more favorably. Ultimately the authors found that removing social desirability variance from personality scales was not helpful in increasing their validity, which the authors indicated was evidence that social desirability is more of a response style than a bias (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006).

Previous work has shown that removing social desirability from personality measures doesn't significantly change ratings in assessments, indicating that social desirability may measure actual personality characteristics (Ones & Visweswaran, 1998). While this study did demonstrate that, on some level, social desirability did contribute erroneous variance to some of the results, neuroticism more specifically, it did not appear to impact the other personality factors, indicating that social desirability is not simply a biasing factor in all personality assessment. However, the difficulty in disentangling social desirability and personality traits may indicate that social desirability is more in line with one's personality as opposed to strictly adaptive or maladaptive. In addition, the relationship between social desirability and neuroticism may demonstrate that social desirability is adaptive, as neuroticism was the only personality trait impacted by social desirability. The current study aimed to investigate this by utilizing measures of self-rated affect and coding of narrative-based qualitative datum to make connections between self-reports of functioning and actual functioning through response analysis.

One metanalysis of personality tests used for personnel selection and job performance, found that, on the BIDR, impression management and self-deception did not generate specious effects on measures of the relationship between personality and performance, nor did they predict future performance (Li & Bagger, 2006). As social desirability was presumed to be intentional, the authors were interested in faking overall, and if that faking had any impact on actual performance. The authors sought to investigate if the self-deception factor of the BIDR was specifically related to job performance, as self-deception has been hypothesized to share content variance with some Big 5 personality factors, specifically neuroticism and conscientiousness (Li & Bagger, 2006). Conscientiousness ( $p=.42$ ) and agreeableness ( $p=.42$ ) showed the strongest correlations with impression management, while emotional stability

showed a weaker correlation ( $p=.35$ ) (Li & Bagger, 2006). In contrast, emotional stability had the strongest correlation with self-deception ( $p=.54$ ) and conscientiousness ( $p=.42$ ), and a weaker correlation with extraversion ( $p=.31$ ) (Li & Bagger, 2006). If social desirability were a bias, then the removal of variance associated with social desirability would be expected to result in significant changes in the validity of personality variables. Using semi-partial correlations, the authors found varied patterns of criterion validity depending on the social desirability measure used, either impression management or self-deception (Li & Bagger, 2006). For impression management the change in criterion validity ranged from zero to .04 for the five personality variables, and for self-deception, the change in criterion validity ranged from .02 to .04, which the writers described as a negligible to small effect (Li & Bagger, 2006). Thus, social desirability did not significantly change the criterion validity of self-rated personality factors, which is inconsistent with the bias perspective.

### **Social Desirability, Culture, and Age**

Social desirability has been evaluated across cultures, but most of the work has been done with college students, both in the validation of measures and in subsequent studies (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Gravdal & Sandal, 2006; Hui, 2001; Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik; Paulhus, 1984). The home culture and ages of the investigators and the respondents can impact results due to the types of questions asked on social desirability scales. For example, there are questions on the full-scale Marlowe-Crowne that reference voting, going out to restaurants, and owning a car (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964), while the full-scale BIDR has questions on checking out books from the library, going through customs, and taking sick-leave from work (Paulhus, 1988). All of these aforementioned items may be culturally loaded and probe for experiences considered



common for the cultures the scales were validated on, but not generalizable to the general population.

One study investigated the cross-cultural generalizability of the Marlowe-Crowne scale. Using six cultural dimensions; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, individualism-collectivism, and long-term time orientations, the authors sought to explore the differences in social desirability across country cultures (Middleton & Jones, 2000). Students from Eastern cultures (including Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, and China) were thought to be representative of countries high in power-distance (uneven allocation of power in society), uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and long-term time dimensions (society values strategy and cautious financial decisions), and moderately high on masculinity (society values materialism and assertive behavior), while students from Western countries (including Canada and the United States) were thought to be representative of societies low on power distance and uncertainty avoidance, and high on individualism, short-term time orientation and masculinity dimensions (Middleton & Jones, 2000). The authors conducted 2 studies, with students from a variety of Western and Eastern cultures enrolled in an undergraduate business program in the Southwest United States (Middleton & Jones, 2000). As business is also a very public and social profession, the results may be relatable to the teaching profession as well. Using the Reynolds short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, the authors found significant differences in response tendencies between Western and Eastern subjects (Middleton & Jones, 2000). In both studies, an ANOVA found no significant differences between subjects from the 14 Asian countries represented in Study One (104 students) and the 10 in Study Two (96 students), however there were significant differences between subjects from the Asian countries represented and the Western countries (237 in Study 1, 163 in Study 2)

(Middleton & Jones, 2000). There was no data collected on the length of time that students had been in the United States (Middleton & Jones, 2000). Students received extra credit in their class for participating in the study, making the study not completely anonymous (Middleton & Jones, 2000). Students from the Asian countries were more likely than Western students to deny socially undesirable traits and endorse socially desirable traits (Middleton & Jones, 2000). Using item-to-total correlations, there were also reliability differences between Eastern and Western subjects, with Western subjects having an alpha of .72, and Eastern students having an alpha of .43 (Middleton & Jones, 2000). This research shows that students of a similar age, at similar institutions, display different relationships with social desirability depending on their home culture, however further analyses were not conducted on the relationship between the specific cultural dimensions and social desirability. This pattern of differences fell along home cultural lines, despite the fact that students were currently in a Western country. If it were truly a bias designed to enhance self-presentation then it would be aligned with the overall values of the current environment, not an individual's dominant culture. This fits in with the idea of social desirability as an adaptive motivation towards social evaluation because it indicates that socially desirable responding is deeper than a bias; it's a cultural value that persists even in environments inconsistent with those values. This is especially salient because participation in the study was not private, indicating that social desirability is a cultural value that is influenced by one's own principles in an environment, not necessarily the beliefs of others in that environment. Social desirability in the context of the Middleton and Jones study offered social flexibility based on one's own adaptive context.

Larson and Bradshaw (2017) investigated the relationship between social desirability and race, social desirability and gender and sexuality, and social desirability and college major in

relation to cultural competence in a review of the literature on both the Marlowe-Crowne and BIDR scales. Overall, the authors found small to moderate positive correlations between social desirability and cultural competence (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). The authors found that there were also practitioner attributes that were significantly related to cultural competence, as well as to social desirability (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). For example, two studies found that African American counselors rated themselves significantly more highly than their white counterparts on cultural competence scales. Another three studies showed that minority respondents scored more highly on measures of cultural competence than their white counterparts, with one explanation being that ethnic minorities had more direct contact with clients of different races (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). There were mixed results for gender and cultural competence, with five studies finding significant gender differences in cultural competence and three reporting no significant differences (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). Of the five studies that reported gender differences, three found that women were higher than men in cultural competence, one found the reverse, and another found that men had more multicultural knowledge, but women had a better understanding of cultural barriers (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). In terms of sexuality, one study found that LGBTQIA participants self-reported higher multicultural competence as compared to heterosexual participants. In addition to cultural competence differences based on identity, there were also differences dependent on level of education and area of study. One study found that self-reports of multicultural competence increased by degree, with master's students having higher competence than undergraduate students and doctoral students having higher competence than master's students (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). Psychology majors also reported higher cultural competence than students in other counseling programs like school counseling,

school psychology and student services (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). Ultimately, the researchers concluded that some measures of cultural competence could be impacted by social desirability, but the differences in the samples of the studies reviewed could also be impacting the results (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). This research supported the idea of an adaptive view of social desirability, as self-reports differed not based on a need for overall positive impressions, but a desire to present a certain way that differed depending on how the individual viewed themselves and their professional identity.

As many social desirability studies have been conducted with college students, researchers have also worked to investigate potential age differences in social desirability presentation. Using the BIDR, Li, Niu and Li explored the impact of age and situation on impression management and self-deception in Chinese teachers, teaching in China (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). The authors asked 158 teachers to complete the BIDR for a job analysis task by organizational leaders in either a high or low social desirability situation (this datum will be used to adjust your salary vs. this datum will be used to study your position, please answer honestly) (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). Age was divided into cohorts of 20-29 and 30-39 years old, and the authors controlled for gender, as the participant distribution was uneven, and tenure, as there was a high correlation between tenure and age (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). Using univariate analyses, the authors found that both situation and age significantly impacted socially desirable responding. Multivariate analyses showed that older Chinese teachers scored significantly higher on both impression management and self-deception than younger teachers, and that women had significantly higher impression management scores than men (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). Impression management was also significantly impacted by the situation, while self-deception was not, with older Chinese teachers being more likely than younger teachers to still respond in a socially

desirable manner even in the honest situation (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). The authors clarified that further research is needed, as previous studies have found age effects only in women, in previous studies (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011). The results of this study lend support to Paulhus's reasoning for the two-factor model, as impression management and self-deception related differently to the situation, as well as the idea of potential age differences in social desirability. The authors surmised that Chinese collectivist culture has been related to defensiveness against negative content, as well as image-saving behaviors in prior research, so these results, and the age differences seen in the study may have been related to cultural variables that were not disentangled (Li, Niu, & Li, 2011).

Researchers have also tried to assess social desirability and its relationships to other constructs, based on age. Using a sample of 1175 adults between the ages of 18 and 93 years old, Soubelet and Salthouse explored the relationship between age and social desirability by dividing their sample into younger (under 30) and older (over 65) cohorts, and comparing social desirability as measured by the Marlowe-Crowne, affect (emotionality), and self-rated personality variables between the two groups (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). The authors found that older age was negatively associated with negative affect and positively associated with positive affect, life satisfaction, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and social desirability (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). This research also found that social desirability was also positively related to desirable characteristics and negatively related to undesirable characteristics and that controlling for variance in the social desirability measure did decrease the relationship with age, which would appear to support the traditional bias view of social desirability (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). However, it is not clear whether age or social desirability was the driving

factor in the relationships found with the personality constructs, making the bias perspective unclear in this study.

Overall, many of the cultural components of social desirability fit into the conceptualization of social desirability as a bias. However, in these studies it was unclear whether age or cultural components are the driving factor as opposed to social desirability. The bias perspective of social desirability is a rigid hypothesis that does not allow for further analysis of responding and behavior, which was not the original intent behind the idea of social desirability from Ellis. The current study offered hypotheses of how the cultural context of the pandemic in the U.S., as well as the context of teaching experiences, impacted social desirability as a bias versus as adaptive for the teachers sampled, but this remains a rich avenue for future research.

### **Social Desirability and Coping**

A review of 35 articles found that social desirability is related to multiple self-report constructs including quality of life, well-being, and treatment outcomes (see review, Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016). Most studies in this review treated social desirability as a one-dimensional construct, using the Marlowe-Crowne scale (18 of 35), and 4 of the 35 articles also investigated personality variables in relation to social desirability (see review, Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016). The remaining 12 studies utilized the BIDR and found that distinguishing between impression management and self-deception may be helpful because in two studies, impression management was related to self-reports of harmful behaviors, alcohol use in one and partner violence in another, while self-deception was related to lower levels of depression, hopelessness, and suicide risk in another two (see review, Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016). These findings were interesting: on the one hand, impression management was linked to negative outcomes while self-deception is

related to positive outcomes. However, these results did cast doubt on the traditional bias perspective of social desirability, by illustrating that those with high impression management may respond more honestly, even if that honesty does not portray them desirably. Impression management, which typically is associated with establishing a positive self-presentation for others was here linked to self-reports of engaging in harmful behaviors, which contrasts the idea of social desirability being a bias towards positive self-presentation. Thus, this study raised the question: what are the implications of being concerned with self-presentation? Does this concern manifest as a way to compensate for negative characteristics (e.g., external locus of control), or does it manifest as a true orientation to one's own positive characteristics and honesty about one's deficiencies? Meanwhile, self-deception was related to positive self-reports, consistent with the bias perspective. However, these distinctions were only seen in these three studies; others did not show these same consistent differences between the two scales, when relying on self-reports. These results indicate that social desirability may provide valuable clinical information, depending on the measurement used, and that the relationship between impression management and self-deception needs to be further disentangled.

Other researchers have investigated the differential relationships between impression management and self-deception on the BIDR with coping strategies. Previous works on the bias view of social desirability have referred to social desirability generally as a form of psychological defensiveness as opposed to an overall need for approval (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). Psychological defensiveness is conceptualized similarly to self-deception on the BIDR, so remaining in line with the bias perspective (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). The authors stated that, “defensiveness may lead to the denial of psychologically threatening thoughts and feelings or to overconfidence in one's judgments and rationality” (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006, p.1052). Previous

work has posited that impression management may be a goal-directed coping method in situations where this defensiveness is evoked, while self-deception scores may be related to increased illusions of control, self-esteem, and lower scores on neuroticism, depression, and social anxiety (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006), which would be consistent with higher self-rated coping and higher narrative-based locus of control in the current study. Based on the idea of social desirability as defensiveness, one study examined coping strategies based on Paulhus's conceptualization. The three coping strategies investigated were: active problem-solving, depressive reactions, and comforting cognitions (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). Using 237 psychology undergraduate students in Norway, the investigators administered the Marlowe-Crowne Scale, a short-version of the Defense Mechanism Inventory, a short-version of the Utecht Coping List, the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale, the BIDR, and the Subjective Health Complaints Inventory, and ran a principal component analysis to determine the factor structures of the social desirability measures (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). The measures loaded onto five factors: active coping (proactively using coping strategies), defense (subconscious avoidance process), other-deception, passive coping, and social support (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). Proactively using coping strategies as opposed to subconscious defensiveness would fit into the adaptive perspective in the current study, as the adaptive perspective was intended to be a conscious choice as opposed to an unconscious bias.

Gravdal and Sandal (2006) found that self-deception items loaded onto an active coping factor, consistent with previous research, but not with cognitive defense mechanisms, which is consistent with the adaptive role of self-deception in the Perinelli and Gremigni review, where self-deception was related to lower levels of depression and hopelessness (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006; Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016). This active coping factor was related to self-efficacy and



active problem-solving as opposed to cognitive defense mechanisms (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). These results did come from self-reports, but active problem solving does include taking concrete steps to cope, as opposed to manifesting the appearance of coping, potentially making these self-reports less susceptible to faking. This study also utilized a passive coping factor which was related to passive avoidance, which would not be adaptive (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). Impression management and Marlowe-Crowne loaded onto an other-deception factor and were not related to individual differences in coping on the quantitative coping scale, however they were negatively related to subjective health grievances, indicating that participants higher in impression management or need for approval were less likely to report subjective health complaints (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006). Clinical studies utilizing social desirability scales have also indicated that social desirability has also been related to treatment variables and outcomes, in addition to self-reports of well-being, providing considerable evidence against social desirability being a nuisance that introduced irrelevant variance (Perinelli and Gregmigni, 2016). A key distinction of adaptiveness is that active component vs. the defensiveness associated with the bias view of social desirability. The current study will evaluate narrative-based coping along a continuum of adaptiveness rated by researchers. The Perinelli and Greigni results lend further support to the two-factor model of social desirability, however their view differs from the one taken in this study, which posits that impression management may be adaptive and self-deception may be maladaptive with respect to well-being and functioning. As limitations, the authors noted that their results may reflect faking as opposed to an adaptive defensiveness and that the lack of cultural (e.g., background, country of origin, cultural values) data collected may have impacted the results, as the impact of social desirability may differ across cultures (Gravdal & Sandal,

2006). The authors also suggested that similar data should be collected from participants in a high social desirability situation to confirm the results (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006).

The idea of social desirability as a manifestation of defensiveness has also been investigated in the coping literature. Repressors are individuals who are high on psychological defensiveness (used as a proxy for social desirability) and low on anxiety, who historically have appeared to be the most happy, healthy, and adaptable group in the self-report literature (Furham, Petrides, & Spencer-Bowdage, 2002). The introduction of anxiety indicated that emotional reactivity may alter the meaning of social desirability, across all three conceptualizations. In contrast, physiological studies have reported that repressors were actually the most reactive and most anxious, consistent with the bias perspective of social desirability (Furham, Petrides, & Spencer-Bowdage, 2002). However, it is important to emphasize that defensiveness was used as a proxy for social desirability, which differs from the majority of the literature reviewed, and, as the Gravdal and Sandal study demonstrated, this proxy relationship may not be fully supported in the literature. Though, future research should consider social desirability in concert with emotional reactivity when drawing conclusions about the implications of social desirability as a bias or adaptive. In this study the repressors showed higher scores on emotional intelligence, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and healthy coping (defined as rational coping), as well as lower scores on unhealthy coping styles (defined as emotional and avoidant coping) and rumination in self-reports (Furham, Petrides, & Spencer-Bowdage, 2002). In addition, using both the Marlowe-Crowne and the BIDR, Furham, Petrides, and Spencer Bowdage found that both the Marlowe-Crowne and BIDR scales were similarly able to identify repressors (those high in social desirability and low in anxiety), indicating that “little changes as a function of different social desirability scales even when they tap into different aspects of the construct” (Furham, Petrides,

& Spencer-Bowdage, 2002, p. 128). These results were consistent with the premise that the Marlowe-Crowne and BIDR were tapping into the same overall construct, even as they purported to address different facets of social desirability, something the current study explored.

Using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory's social desirability subscale, Gianakos (2002) found that higher social desirability scores predicted action-oriented coping, and lower social desirability scores predicted maladaptive coping strategies like alcohol use. This social desirability scale was based on personality traits associated with coping styles for dealing with work pressures and stress (e.g. trying to come across as sociable, conscientious, honest and supportive as opposed to irritable, resentful, vain or unproductive) (Gianakos, 2002). This scale is included in non-gender coded items to separate it from strictly masculine vs. feminine traits (Gianakos, 2002). Items were rated on a Likert scale of one to seven from never to always, similar to the continuous rating on the BIDR, however, the items are specifically related to desirable traits in the workplace (Gianakos, 2002). More specifically, external locus of control was predictive of avoidance, whereas internal locus of control was predictive of help seeking and more positive thinking (Gianakos, 2002). However, it would be interesting to consider these results in the context of other personality constructs, such as negative affect. Based on these results, social desirability would likely be more related to an internal locus of control, as the Gianakos (2002) study found, rather than an external one, as would be expected in those with higher negative affect, indicating a sense of agency and an active orientation towards help-seeking. This result would contradict the more maladaptive bias view of social desirability.

Social desirability as a more adaptive construct has also been investigated in relation to interpersonal self-control. Using the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the BIDR, individuals with greater social sensitivity, as measured by social desirability, were found to have stronger social

skills in public settings due to interpersonal self-control (Uziel, 2010). Impression management in particular was related to agreeableness, an important social personality trait, but not extraversion, a desirable personality trait, indicating that the purpose of impression management may not always be a need for external validation (Uziel, 2010). Those higher in impression management showed increased feelings of self-control in public social contexts (e.g., completing a simple task while being recorded) than those with low impression management, indicating that impression management may be related to social flexibility in public situations (Uziel, 2010). Uziel (2010)'s interpretation of impression management as a form of social flexibility was consistent with the adaptive view of the current study.

### **Social Desirability and Performance**

Using the BIDR to appraise the roles of impression management and self-deception on situational behavior, Zerbe and Paulhus theorized that socially desirable responding may represent content variance, as social desirability is related to a need for autonomy: conceptually, those with a high need for autonomy need less social approval (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). This was expected to manifest in less universally desirable responding (e.g., on self-reports), consistent with the current study. This was also expected to relate to the coded narratives, as under the bias perspective it would be expected that there would not be relations between the narratives and self-ratings. Theoretically, impression management would be low in private situations, and would increase more publicly as self-presentation becomes more necessary (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). The authors hypothesized that individual differences in impression management may reflect a strategic and deliberate attempt to use influence in social situations, particularly in environments where social influence and social conformity are emphasized as important goals (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Individual impression management differences can

provide information on organizational behavior and the situations that promote socially desirable responding, as well as the goals for doing so (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). While the authors' conceptual hypotheses about impression management centered around individual goal-seeking, their hypotheses about self-deception focused on self-deception as a form of justification for behavior in organizations. This conceptual distinction between impression management and self-deception may be further illuminated by the current study, as the survey was anonymous and therefore very private. If self-deception is a form of justification for behavior as opposed to a public self-presentation goal like impression management, it would be expected that if social desirability were a bias there would be higher self-deception scores, as opposed to impression management scores, as compared to both scale norms and overall mean ratings. If social desirability were a bias, it would also be expected that there would be higher correlations between approval-seeking behaviors and impression management than between the same behaviors and self-deception. Thus, in the current study, there was an opportunity to provide clarification on the conceptual distinction between self-deception and impression management in anonymous conditions, which would be seen in greater self-deception scores, and lower correlations between self-deception and approval-seeking constructs, as compared to impression management. The authors found that self-deception was related to higher levels of self-reported adjustment, ego resilience, autonomy in decisions, and higher expectations about the effectiveness of effort, consistent with the results of previous work on self-deception, which has found that self-deception is related to lower levels of depression (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006; Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016, Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Zerbe and Paulhus noted that self-deception could be advantageous in stressful situations where there is role ambiguity, as self-deceivers may be better at coping with ambiguity due to their altered view of the circumstances

(Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). The authors were clear that socially desirable responding is not always a bias, and that how a researcher fits social desirability into their own theoretical framework determines what it represents (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). The authors also hypothesized that anonymous conditions decrease the likelihood that there will be relationships between social desirability and other constructs, although subsequent research has not consistently confirmed this. Therefore, the anonymous nature of the current study can help clarify this idea. The results of this study conducted by Zerbe & Paulhus (1987) indicated that self-deception appeared to be more adaptive than impression management. However, the study did not investigate actual job performance, or the self-perceptions of performance (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Overall, the importance of individual responses to social desirability as a reflection of personality was emphasized, but more research needs to be done to disentangle the adaptive versus maladaptive impacts of impression management and self-deception.

Due to its association with faking, social desirability has also been investigated with job performance. Using the BIDR, one study compared the impact of impression management and self-deception on both personality and job performance, with managers rating themselves, and their peers, supervisors and subordinates providing other-ratings (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). While previous studies have shown that social desirability does not have an impact on actual job performance (Ones & Viswesvaran, 1998), this study found that accounting for impression management scores did not increase job performance predictions, but accounting for self-deception did (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). This result is significant, as the use of social desirability measures in personnel selection tends to be justified by a fear of other-deception, where applicants deliberately enhance their self-reports to obtain employment (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). This difference was influenced by the interaction between the personality trait

extraversion and self-deception, as well as the predictive validity of emotional stability, when social desirability was controlled (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). This interaction occurred because higher self-deception scores lowered the validity of extraversion scores, consistent with the conceptual link established between extraversion and self-deception hypothesized by Paulhus, where self-deception is suggestive of an egoistic bias where participants would be motivated to respond in a way to seem more extraverted, because extraversion is desirable (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). In addition, emotional stability was the only personality factor that showed increased predictive validity when self-deception scores were partialled out of the model, and the relationship between self-deception and job performance was significant and negative only when emotional stability was partialled out of that model (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). The authors interpreted these results to mean that self-deception made extraversion scores less valid, since self-deception likely reflected rigidity, overconfidence, and a lack of self-insight (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). The authors also stated that there was a complicated relationship between self-deception and emotional stability, which may indicate that self-deception is adaptive, that self-deceivers downplay their actual emotions, or that emotional stability mitigates the negative impact of self-deception (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007). The current study will explore the relationship between self-deception and self-rated affect as well, to lend further evidence to the social desirability perspectives in this research. Emotional stability was the sole variable that showed increased predictive validity when self-deception scores were controlled for, and the relationship between self-deception and performance was significant only when emotional stability was controlled for (Berry, Page, & Sackett, 2007). In addition, there was no correlational relationship between self-deception and performance, as rated by work colleagues, and the relationship between them was significantly negative only when emotional

stability was removed from the regression (emotional stability and self-deception had a .58 correlation in this study) (Berry, Page, & Sackett, 2007). The authors noted that results may vary depending on the specific job of the participants used in a self-deception study (Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007).

The BIDR was also investigated with 200 college students in Bosnia and Herzegovina across three separate conditions: honest responding, responding as an ideal job manager, and responding as an ideal teacher (Dodaj, 2012). The authors reported that in previous research there have been low correlations between personality and actual job performance, and that the allegedly unconscious self-deception has been sensitive to change depending on the experimental context used (Dodaj, 2012). The results of the Dodaj study indicated that participants in the ideal teacher condition were more likely to emphasize their social characteristics and de-emphasize any immoral conduct, while participants in the ideal manager condition were more likely to emphasize their social and intellectual characteristics (Dodaj, 2012). These results brought Paulhus's model into question as an accurate measure of social desirability because self-deception in particular is meant to be unconscious, therefore results shouldn't change in different social conditions. However, context may influence unconscious processes, with some situations eliciting higher levels of defensiveness than others. This study also provides further evidence that context is key, and social desirability may represent an active adaptation in behavior depending on the individual's professional context. These contextual factors will be further discussed in the next section, as well as their implications for educators.

### **Social Desirability and Teachers**

In order to disentangle the impact of social desirability in teachers, it is important to clarify what teachers find desirable in their profession. Across the last several decades, there



have been multiple studies of what aspects of teaching teachers find desirable, with similar results throughout time. One early study of teachers' motives for teaching baked social desirability ratings into a career motive inventory, where student teachers were asked to rank desirable aspects of the job by importance, and undesirable aspects of the job by bearableness (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). Student teachers were an ideal population for this study because past research had shown that teachers underestimated the public perception of their job status, so individuals choosing to enter the field offered a reference group for perceived societal values and motives (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). The 110-student sample was divided by gender, and for women, by student-teaching at the elementary or secondary level (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). The job characteristics rated as most important were: opportunity for creativity, intellectual development, opportunity to influence or help others, opportunity to work with children and independence, and did not differ by gender (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). All of these can be considered socially desirable attributes, particularly for educators. The job characteristics rated as less desirable differed significantly by gender (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). Women rated lack of intellectual stimulation, lack of work-life balance, and not being able to see the impact of one's own accomplishments as the most important disadvantages, while men rated little opportunity for advancement and low pay as the most important disadvantages (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). Student teachers were also asked to rank the desirability of their own motives, via the desirable versus undesirable characteristics rated earlier in the study, against other student teachers' motives for teaching (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). Female student teachers, particularly ones teaching at the secondary school level, viewed other student teachers' motives for teaching as undesirable (Nelsen & Giebink, 1968). This research sheds light on potential past gender differences in teachers' role expectations, as well as past perspectives on the perceptions of

student teachers. This research also illustrated how desirably some teachers viewed other teachers' motives for teaching, and how stereotypes of teachers permeate public social perceptions. Both the gender and the time period context that this study was conducted in could also shed light on the varied results and provide important context for subsequent studies on social desirability in teachers' self-reports that will be clarified later in this review.

Two decades after Nelsen and Giebink, researchers further investigated teachers' values, and what they find reinforcing about teaching (Maes & Anderson, 1985). Teachers had previously reported that working with students, their relationships with other teachers, sense of achievement, program freedom, skill growth and achievement were some of their sources of reinforcement and satisfaction, consistent with Nelsen and Giebink's (1968) work (Maes & Anderson, 1985). Similarly to Nelsen and Giebink's (1968) study as well, some sources of dissatisfaction for teachers in the Maes and Anderson (1985) study were: outside attitudes about teaching, administration policies, salary, workload and perceived teacher status. Social desirability ultimately did not have a significant relationship with any of the teaching values assessed, indicating that social desirability did not impact what teachers found reinforcing in their job (Maes & Anderson, 1985). The four most significant factors for what teachers found reinforcing were: recognition from others, the teaching and learning process, relationships with other teachers, and the attitudes of parents and society (Maes & Anderson, 1985). The concern surrounding outside perceptions of their roles from parents and society is particularly important when thinking of social desirability. As social desirability did not influence what teachers found reinforcing, these concerns operate outside of any internal motivation for social desirability, meaning that there may be core well-being and motivational needs for general populations of teachers, that are related to how they present to stakeholders as professionals.

Teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful jobs, and past studies have indicated that frequent sources of stress for include: an unsatisfactory salary, perceived low status, role ambiguity and conflict, time pressure, misbehaving students, supervisor relationships, and class sizes, consistent with some of the undesirable aspects of teaching reported in prior studies (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010). These sources of stress can eventually lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout, as well as decreased mental health (Brackett et. al., 2010). Thus, determining potential positive psychological attributes that relate to affect and coping is critical. The adaptive perspective of social desirability offers one such positive perspective, particularly during the pandemic. Survey studies have indicated that some of the greatest difficulties for teachers in the pandemic have been lower instructional efficacy, time pressure, and a lack of support from administrative supervisors (Francom, Lee & Pinkney, 2021; Moldavan, Capraro, & Capraro, 2021; Pressley & Ha, 2021). The authors utilized emotional intelligence theory's conceptualization of emotion regulation, which states that those with higher emotion regulation have a more substantive battery of skills to "maintain desirable emotions and to reduce or modify unwanted emotions in both themselves and other people" (Brackett et. al., 2010, p.409). This ability to preserve desirable emotions and minimize undesirable emotions in oneself and others fits in well with the idea of social desirability as adaptive. In presenting oneself in a certain way, it is possible to modulate one's own responses as well as the manners in which others respond in social situations. These underlying adaptive dimensions would be positive attributes, particularly in a public facing profession such as teaching. This past research on what teachers find important and motivating in their careers, both prior to and during COVID have informed the coding categories that were utilized in the current study.

To further investigate secondary school teachers' well-being and satisfaction, Hobson and Maxwell investigated early-career teachers and self-determination theory (Hobson, & Maxwell 2017). Self-determination theory hypothesizes that when psychological demands for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled, overall well-being is enhanced (Hobson, & Maxwell 2017). As mentioned previously in this review, autonomy and social desirability appear to be connected as those individuals with higher autonomy would be hypothesized to need less approval from others (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). In the context of the current study, initiative-taking in the classroom during COVID would thus be hypothesized to be adaptive. As well-being has been enabled by intrinsic motivation, participants who questioned their teaching effectiveness had lower levels of well-being (Hobson, & Maxwell 2017). Participants also reported that autonomy was adaptive and had a positive impact on their well-being, while performativity (hiding weaknesses in teaching practice) had a negative impact on workplace culture, and interpersonal relationships (Hobson, & Maxwell 2017). Overall, social connection in the school community, autonomy, and perceived teaching effectiveness are all critical components of teacher well-being during the pandemic, and the current study aims to further disentangle some of those relationships through self-ratings and narrative-based ratings of affect, stress and, narrative-based locus of control, and coping (Hobson, & Maxwell 2017).

Past research has deconstructed the means by which communities have returned to in-person learning after a community-wide emergency remote teaching event. Past research has indicated that few schools are prepared for a pandemic, due to a lack of teacher training on remote learning (Francom, Lee, & Pinkney, 2021). In addition, teachers had to vary their teaching strategies drastically, on short notice, including assigning review work to make up for the gaps in new learning (Francom, Lee, & Pinkney, 2021). One method conceptualizes four

phases of teacher return: “react, recover and redesign; restart; reconsolidate; review and reflect” and these reflections help researchers understand which factors are valued by teachers during times of transition (Francom, Lee, & Pinkney, 2021, p. 590). Within this framework, it is encouraged that teachers reflect on the past, and see what lessons and materials they could continue to use to make a future transition easier (Francom, Lee, & Pinkney, 2021). However, school districts themselves have a large impact on what technologies have been and will be adopted during and after the pandemic, leading to inequities in the quality of learning activities (Francom, Lee, & Pinkney, 2021). These inequities in the quality of learning activities available, could then impact teachers’ feelings of effectiveness and efficacy in the classroom leading to changes in their overall feelings of well-being. Thus, the adaptive view of social desirability may offer an alternative perspective on how some teachers, when faced with an event that disrupt their normal teaching activities, are able to adapt and cope while trying to maintain some level of control in a seemingly uncontrollable situation. Information about adaptiveness in this study was gained through teachers’ narratives about their experiences in the context of the pandemic.

### **Social Desirability Conclusions**

While social interactions changed globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in particular were impacted by the sudden and prolonged change in contact. Participants in the current study answered anonymously, but their framing of events was influenced by the then-current social context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as their day-to-day social interactions had shifted, and this change in relationships had forced teachers to not only change their instructional methods, but also the way that they engaged with students and colleagues. However, it was expected that no matter the nature of the survey, that social desirability ratings would relate more to self-ratings if the self-report construct being rated was valued as an important aspect of self-

presentation. As social desirability can provide a framework for social perceptions, it was important to consider how teachers frame themselves in a professional context, when their previous conceptualizations of themselves and their role had been drastically changed. The format and nature of items, particularly on the dichotomous Marlowe-Crowne scale, was a critical complexity, as respondents were prompted to respond with extreme responses (either true or false), as opposed to being able to respond on a continuum. Self-ratings on social desirability scales reflect how one wishes to be perceived by others, which could reflect an adaptive motivation related to how one interacted with the environmental aspects that they control. For example, those with higher social desirability may try to actively change their teaching methods to better connect with their students, particularly during a disruption of normal teaching activities. This initiative-taking may then relate back to self and narrative ratings of coping, as exercising a degree of control in a situation that was, in many ways, uncontrollable. The complexities of the Marlowe-Crowne Scale versus the BIDR may provide additional insight into how the nature of the measure captured the construct of social desirability in the current sample.

Social desirability as a faking response to perceived social pressure does not appear to tell the whole story. When conceptualized as faking, social desirability is a bias that must be controlled for to generate accurate results in self-report research. When conceptualized as a personality style, social desirability is potentially adaptive, with implications for how individuals orient themselves socially. As seen in this review, social desirability, both as a one-factor construct and in its two-factor formulation, has been positively related to well-being, but the nature of this relationship raises further questions. As social desirability is parceled into impression management and self-deception, relationships with other self-rated concepts shift, but there is a gap in the literature as to how exactly these two constructs relate in different ways to

different self-rated dimensions of areas such as affect, coping and stress. If social desirability is a bias, then the relations between any conceptualization of social desirability and self-ratings would be distorted by faking, making the ratings of these constructs irrelevant to actual functioning. In this study, narratives served as a proxy measure of one's functioning, captured by coding of locus of control and coping. Since the interpretation of the narratives was obscure to the participants, they were not readily falsified. If social desirability were adaptive or if it provided useful information, then we would expect meaningful relations between social desirability and other self-ratings as well as with the narrative-ratings, even though responses were anonymous. For the purposes of the current study, functioning was coded by researchers from open-ended narratives in response to narrative-based responses to open-ended questions about takeaways from COVID. As a bias, social desirability would be a source of measurement error, but if it is adaptive or informative, then it is baked into the true score on self-report measures. Hence, different conceptualizations of social desirability were hypothesized to support different patterns of relations among variables that are relevant to actual performance. Table 1 further illustrates studies in support of the different perspectives discussed in the current review.

Table 1  
*Studies in Support*

Bias	Adaptive
Marlowe & Crowne, 1960 (MC)	Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016 (MC, BIDR)
Paulhus, 1984 (BIDR, MC)	Hui, 2001 (MC)
Larson & Bradshaw, 2017 (MC)	McCrae & Costa, 1983 (BIDR)
Li, Niu, & Li, 2011 (BIDR)	Li & Bagger, 2006 (BIDR)
Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011 (MC)	Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006 (BIDR)

Gravdal & Sandal, 2006 (MC, BIDR)	Middleton & Jones (MC)
Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987 (BIDR)	Perinelli & Gremigni, 2016 (MC, BIDR)
Berry, Page & Sackett, 2007 (BIDR)	Furham, Petrides, & Spencer- Bowdage, 2002 (MC, BIDR)
	Dodaj, 2012 (BIDR)
	Borkenau, & Ostendorf, 1992 (BIDR)

## The Current Study

The preceding review illustrated that social desirability is a multi-faceted construct influenced by explicit and implicit social transactions within oneself, and with others. The predominant conceptualization of social desirability has been as a universal biasing agent in self-reports. However, if social desirability permeates every aspect of self-reports, controlling for it completely may not be feasible, and even when it is feasible, it has often not been shown to change the relations between self and other-reports. Therefore, when looking to understand the role of social desirability, it is critical to elucidate what social desirability may be adding to self-reports, instead of simply trying to take it away. Teachers, who have a very unique perspective due to the very social and evaluative nature of their profession, offered an ideal group to explore social desirability with. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic offered a challenging environment within which to examine social desirability. One study of 361 teachers across the United States in October 2020, found that teacher's quantitative ratings of their own self-efficacy in instruction and in engagement were lower for those teaching virtually vs. those teaching hybrid or in-person (Pressley & Ha, 2021).

Under the bias perspective, researchers have sought to control for social desirability under the assumption that it adds baseless variance to self-reports. The bias perspective is



inherently maladaptive, as both the Crowne and Marlowe and Paulhus conceptualizations demonstrate. Crowne and Marlowe's definition specifically made note of dependence as an outcome of high social desirability, with the authors stating that a need for approval "had to entail vulnerability in self-esteem and the use of repressive defenses" that would ultimately manifest in difficulty asserting independence (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964, p.18). Given that in the pandemic, safety guidance constantly changed, impacting teachers' available modes of instruction. Difficulty inserting independence would seem maladaptive in this context, as the external factors impacting teachers already limited some degree of autonomy. Paulhus's definition emphasized that those high in social desirability, "seem to display a defensiveness toward psychologically threatening suggestions" and that both the impression management and self-deception factors should be controlled for in self-reports, as long as they weren't an intrinsic aspect of the construct being assessed (e.g., self-deception not being controlled for in a measure of perceived control) (Paulhus, 1984, p. 607). However, if social desirability is present in all aspects of self-reports, it would stand to reason that it is an intrinsic value of those self-reports and should not be controlled for. Additionally, if social desirability is present in all self-reports, than it would also stand to reason that it would be important to have a better understanding of how it impacts both self and narrative or other-based reports.

There is a gap in research evaluating patterns of self-report constructs of all three conceptualizations of social desirability in one study. The current study aimed to utilize these three conceptualizations to gauge if they were comparable in how they aligned with other self and narrative report variables. This is a unique contribution of this research to the social desirability literature. Thirty years after their original study, Douglas Crowne, of Crowne and Marlowe expressed that his views on the nature of social desirability had changed, reflecting a

more adaptive perspective. He argued that social desirability cannot be stripped away because it is, “more than a nuisance in personality assessment; it showed that people do not leave their needs and expectancies... outside the tester’s door” and that his eponymous scale “lives on in part because investigators misconstrue a socially desirable response style and what it expresses” (Crowne, 1991, p.18). Social desirability, in his subsequent esteem represented an aspect of personality and a self-evaluative response style that was indicative of, as opposed to shielding, the person underneath (Crowne, 1991). Based on the foregoing review, it appears that research is beginning to come around to this view, conceptualizing social desirability as more adaptive or at the very least, informative and not to be dismissed. Past studies utilizing all three conceptualizations (impression management and self-deception from the BIDR and need for approval from the Marlowe-Crowne) of social desirability have typically been looking to validate the one vs. two factor model as a measure of social desirability or faking, as opposed to systematically breaking down patterns of relationships with other self-report variables (Gravdal & Sandal, 2006; Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holde, 2016; Leite & Beretvas, 2005).

The current study aimed to replicate my past research results with full-time teachers, as well as to compare results using another measure of social desirability and the narrative codes. My previous research utilized a short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne scale (which was also utilized in this study) to parse out relations between affect, coping competence and perceived stress reactivity in student-teachers completing their senior year internship, to try and established an adaptive alternative definition for social desirability (Travis, 2020). This adaptive perspective was conceptualized as an adaptive motivation towards social evaluation, where individuals high on externally motivated conceptualizations of social desirability (e.g. the Marlowe-Crowne and impression management) actually represented a positive influence on adjustment in teachers

(Travis, 2020). The patterns of correlational relationships expected for both the bias and adaptive perspectives will be further described below.

The current study used narrative codes to learn more about how teachers thought about their actual experiences during COVID, in the form of what they found most significant about their experience thus far. These narratives were dichotomously coded for locus of control and on a continuum of distress-coping. These codes were chosen because of their association with teaching efficacy, as evidence of the adaptive perspective of social desirability. Teachers' beliefs about their own self-efficacy contribute to their willingness to try new strategies in the classroom and strongly influence teaching effectiveness (Senler & Vural, 2013). The open-ended narratives used in the current study prompted for reflection, and were coded for dimensions of distress and autonomy. Hence, there was evidence for a myriad of self-report correlations, important to one's self-perceptions, that influenced constructs such as social desirability and teaching efficacy.

The current study attempted to parse out how social desirability and other self-ratings of coping and stress impacted narrative codes of locus of control and distress-coping, entrenched in the context of the narrator's experience at the time of writing. At the time this research was conducted there were debates over whether to return to in-person schooling (Goldstein & Scheiber, 2022). One study found that initial reactions of confusion in March of 2020 eventually led to frustration and anxiety because of the loss of control (Sayman & Cornell, 2021). Teachers in particular were at a paradoxical intersection of power (with their students) and incapacity (depending on the whims of administration, lawmakers, and parents), especially at this point in the pandemic (Ho, 2005). Teachers felt as though their work/life balance was disrupted, and as though there were diminished connections with their students (Sayman & Cornell, 2021). This then contributed to feelings of identity loss because teachers weren't able to teach in the way

they had been trained to (Sayman & Cornell, 2021). However, research found that teachers who were able to cope with that uncertainty ended up going beyond what was expected of them, and used their creativity to increase student engagement (Sayman & Cornell, 2021). This action-oriented coping, supported by research during the pandemic, was one focus of the narrative-based codes in the current study, offering insight into a potential behavioral correlate of social desirability.

### *Marlowe-Crowne*

In my past research, student-teachers more highly (than past samples that items were validated on) endorsed items that were related to their experience teaching, even if they were not considered desirable (e.g. a question about being jealous of the good fortune of others was endorsed by 80% of participants versus 30% in the original validation) (Travis, 2020). Crowne and Marlowe reasoned that a respondent high in social desirability would show psychological defensiveness in their responses (by trying to appear more favorably), as well as a degree of paranoia about the motivations of others (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Thus, when compared to other self-report constructs, it would be expected that a respondent high in Marlowe-Crowne social desirability would rate themselves highly on culturally approved constructs and try to minimize their associations with undesirable traits. This desire to present in socially acceptable ways would manifest maladaptively, because an individual needing approval struggles with autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The extreme dichotomy of the responses makes the Marlowe-Crowne impossible in real life. The Marlowe-Crowne scale is scored dichotomously, with respondents marking an extremely worded item (e.g. no matter who I'm talking to, I'm **always** a good listener) as either true or false, indicating that they either always or never display a behavior (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). It is extremely improbable that

an individual always does something, however, respondents may be rating “always” for an item they perceive that they do most of the time.

The Marlowe-Crowne scale has exhibited more behavioral correlates than other social desirability scales (Paulhus, 1984). This manifests as observed “social compliance” to protect “vulnerable self-esteem” (Berger, Levin, Jacobson, & Millham, 1977). This social compliance, however, was more in line with defensiveness, where individuals high in Marlowe-Crowne social desirability sought to avoid failure even when it was immoral (e.g. cheating in a laboratory experiment when they perceived failure), and even avoid social evaluation (Berger, Levin, Jacobson, & Millham, 1977, p. 460). Social desirability on the Marlowe-Crowne has shown modest positive correlations with measures of well-being, as well as inverse correlations with measures of psychopathology in both self-ratings and ratings confirmed by respondent’s significant others (Kozma & Stones, 1987; Lane, Merikangas, Schwartz, Huang, & Prusoff, 1990). In the past literature, the Marlowe-Crowne scale has shown a consistent strong negative correlation with negative affect, which is related to poor coping and self-reported stress (Brajša-Žganec, Ivanović, & Lipovčan, 2011; Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). So, it stands to reason that due to this consistent negative association with negative affect, there would also be a significant negative correlation with self-rated dimensions of quantitative stress on the PSRS and Beginner Teacher Experiences Scale.

This study aimed to provide further support for a redefinition of social desirability as an adaptive construct, as patterns of relationships with other self-report constructs differed based on what was personally considered desirable to the respondents. Based on the literature reviewed, I previously conceptualized that an adaptive motivation to social evaluation would be seen if there were universal negative correlations with negative constructs (e.g. social desirability being

negatively correlated with negative affect and perceived stress reactivity) and positive correlations with some but not all positive constructs (e.g. positively correlated with coping and the Beginner Teacher Experiences scale, not related to positive affect) (Travis, 2020). For example, something like positive affect, though desirable generally, had not been shown to be adaptive in teachers, as it has been reported to correspond with the personality trait extraversion (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018). Extraversion had not been shown to motivate students academically, or contribute to higher quality instruction, therefore it was not necessarily needed for teachers (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018). In my previous work positive affect was not related to student-teachers' social desirability, though neither was negative affect, in contrast to previous research (Travis, 2020).

As the adaptive perspective is tied to what an individual specifically finds desirable, narratives should also be a reflection of what the individual actually finds salient in the moment as opposed to self-ratings on a prescribed scale. Coding narratives for personal meaning and significance has been previously investigated, though, as previously reported, not as much with the Marlowe-Crowne scale (Nelson et. al. 2009; Tibubos et. al., 2019). In the study that utilized both the Marlowe-Crowne and coded narratives, total number of words (e.g., length of story) was not related to social desirability (Nelson et. al., 2009). To determine temporal sequences in the narratives, the experiments used what they termed sequencing probability, or the likelihood of success or failure (coded as a binary yes/no) of a narrative being rated as sequential (Nelson et. al., 2009). Using logistic regression, Marlowe-Crowne scores were more strongly negatively related to story sequencing probability in the stressful story recounting than in a neutral condition (Nelson et. al., 2009), with stressful stories being less likely to be sequential than neutral stories for those high on the Marlowe-Crowne. These results can be interpreted in one of two ways:

either participants are avoiding emotional and narrative details in recounting because they are too defensive to face them (bias perspective), or they are coping with past stressful situations by not forcing themselves to relive painful memories (adaptive perspective) (Nelson et. al., 2009).

These results were particularly salient for the current study, as the context in which the survey was completed was during a spike in the COVID-19 pandemic, a time of global stress, making the context more negative than neutral. One area where the adaptive perspective could contribute to the current social desirability literature was in relating narrative codes to self-reports. It was expected that under the adaptive perspective, higher mean scores at the high end of the distress-coping continuum would be related to higher mean scores of social desirability as measured by the Marlowe-Crowne. However, this was a relatively untapped area of research, therefore the area of the current study that focused on narrative codes is largely exploratory.

The narratives in the current study were intentionally left open so that what the narrator chose to write about offered unique insight into what actions they may have taken to move forward in the classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic. Very little research has used the Marlowe-Crowne scale in comparison with narratives, with most controlling for social desirability in the results. In my review, there was one study that actually compared Marlowe-Crowne scores to narrative codes. Conceptualizing Marlowe-Crowne's idea of social desirability as avoidance, a study of young adults found that individuals who spoke about their past as a sequence of events without narration (e.g. listing a sequence of temporal events), scored more highly on the Marlowe-Crowne Scale, which would be consistent with the bias or maladaptive perspective of the current study (Nelson, Bein, Huemer, Ryst, & Steiner, 2009). Importantly, it could also suggest that regardless of whether social desirability is adaptive or not, that its influence goes beyond deliberate faking in self-reports, and appears to be baked into how the

respondent views their experiences. Thus, comparing narrative codes and the Marlowe-Crowne scale in the current study was a relatively new area of research and contribution of this study to the literature.

In the current study, narratives were coded for several themes related to perceived teacher autonomy and distress. Codes were chosen based on the previous literature reviewed of what teachers find desirable (e.g. autonomy, support from colleagues in school, less time pressure), after reviewing the narratives for common themes (Francom, Lee & Pinkney, 2021; Maes & Anderson, 1985; Moldavan, Capraro, & Capraro; Nelsen & Giebink, 1968; Pressley & Ha, 2021). As with the Nelson et. al., 2009 study, one popular method of narrative coding assesses narratives for overall coherence, themes, and personal meaning (Tibubos et. al., 2019). Narrative codes by other-raters can help researchers further understand how respondents report their own experiences and embed agency, initiative and coping in the events they describe in those narratives (Tibubos, Köber, Habermas, & Rohrmann, 2019). The self-reports used in this study were not contextualized, however the narratives were specifically fixed in the context in which they were written, with respondents being unaware of how the narratives would be interpreted. Thus, narratives were hypothesized to be difficult to deliberately fake.

Narratives in the current study were coded for locus of control and distress-coping dimension. Locus of control has also been conceptualized as a relatively stable personality trait that is associated with lower situational distress (Krampe et. al., 2021). Typically, individuals high in social desirability would rate themselves as having higher internal locus of control, as that is considered more desirable (Kestenbaum, 1976). Self-rated locus of control has been positively related to perceptions of one's self-efficacy, life satisfaction, optimism and persistence, as well as lower perceived distress (Krampe et. al., 2021). The narratives used in the



current study were also coded for situational distress, on a continuum ranging from an overall global distress (where narratives focused on large external issues respondents had no individual control over, such as the government's choices at the lower end of the spectrum), to an adaptive coping, where narratives focus on what the individual themselves actively did during COVID at the higher end of the spectrum (see appendix for coding categories). Teachers higher on social desirability on the Marlowe-Crowne under the bias perspective would be subject to the whims of powerful others and unable to influence their own outcomes, consistent with lower mean scores on the distress-coping continuum (indicating more distress), as well as external locus of control.

Under the adaptive perspective, it was expected that approval-seeking on the Marlowe-Crowne scale would strengthen the correlational relations between self-rated questionnaires and narratives. This would be expected because, in an adaptive motivation, individuals have different ideas of what is desirable. Qualitative narratives exploring the idea of autonomy through narrative codes of locus of control would be critical because teachers have expressed that autonomy is important to them (Senler & Vural, 2013). To be a successful teacher, one has to be able to produce certain outcomes in the classroom. As previously reviewed, classroom outcomes can be tied to teacher personality traits and perceptions of self-efficacy (Senler & Vural, 2013). Thus, under an adaptive motivation definition of social desirability, it would be expected that high social desirability would be related to an internal narrative-based locus of control. As previously stated, self-rated locus of control has shown positive relationships with areas like self-efficacy and persistence, as well as an inverse relationship with distress (Krampe, et. al., 2021). Under the adaptive perspective it was expected that narrative-based locus of control would be positively correlated to areas like self-rated positive affect as well as narrative-rated coping on the higher end of the distress-coping continuum.

### *Comparing the Marlowe-Crowne with the BIDR*

A similar pattern of relationships as the Marlowe-Crowne in the current study was expected between impression management and the other self-report constructs. Of the two subscales of the BIDR, impression management has been more significantly positively correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne Scale in previous research (Paulhus, 1984) and in the current study. Impression management has been conceptualized as the tendency toward engaging in overt socially desirable behaviors, where individuals high in social desirability deliberately misrepresent themselves to appear more favorably in public versus anonymous conditions (Paulhus, 1984). As impression management is considered deliberate faking in the bias perspective, it was expected that an individual high in impression management would rate themselves more positively on all positive constructs (coping competence, positive affect) and more negatively on all negative constructs (negative affect, perceived stress reactivity, beginner teacher experiences scale). This universal pattern was expected to show similar correlations in both directions as the correlations between the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the same self-report variables. This was expected because in factor analyses, impression management and need for approval have loaded onto the same factor and has shown high concurrent validity with each other (Lambert, Arbuckle, & Holden, 2016; Paulhus, 1984). However, as the BIDR was scored continuously as opposed to dichotomously like the Marlowe-Crowne scale, there may have been some differences in the magnitude of correlations, due to the scoring methodology used. Paulhus specifically recommended that the impression management subscale be controlled for universally, as it does not offer any individual information about content responses (Paulhus, 1984). Thus, under the bias perspective, impression management would be treated as measurement invariance, and partialled out of responses.

Under the adaptive perspective of the current study, it was expected that the correlations between impression management and other self-report constructs would break down along similar lines as the Marlowe-Crowne scale, with a teacher high in impression management being more motivated to portray themselves as skilled in coping competence (positive correlation), and minimize negative associations (negative correlation) with quantitative ratings of stress (PSRS and Beginner Teacher Scale) and negative affect, all of which have been shown to be maladaptive in teachers (Kovalčikienė & Genevičiūtė-Janonė, 2018). As with the Marlowe-Crowne scale, it was expected that there would be no significant positive relationship with positive affect, as positive affect has not been shown to be motivating for teachers (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018). Because impression management is conceptualized as deliberate, a person high in impression management would be expected to show agency in how they choose to represent themselves (Dodaj, 2012). Thus, if how an individual chose to represent themselves fit with their perceived social values (e.g., with traits that are important to being a teacher), then impression management was hypothesized to have adaptive tendencies.

It was expected that impression management, under the bias perspective, would relate to narrative-based external locus of control, but perhaps to a lesser extent than the Marlowe-Crowne scale (due to the all-or-none response option of the MC). Unlike the Marlowe-Crowne scale, where in the bias perspective, low self-esteem leads to a need for external approval, those high in impression management are choosing to fake their answers due to their own motivation to be perceived positively (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960; Paulhus, 1984). However, this desire to manage impressions was still motivated by approbation from others, coinciding with an external locus of control, even if the motivation is coming from an inner desire.

As the narratives in the current study were not subject to faking, it was expected that, under the bias perspective, there would be no significant correlation between impression management and the distress-coping continuum, as well as between impression management and locus of control, consistent with the (albeit limited) past literature. Narratives were intentionally left open-ended, so as not to prompt for any particular positive or negative description of experiences. Therefore, in contrast to self-reports elicited by specific questions, it was difficult to deliberately fake narrative responses to present a favorable impression. Similarly to the Marlowe-Crowne scale, there are not many studies that include both the BIDR and narratives. One study reviewed investigated the impact of impression management on trauma narratives in a group of offenders. Results indicated that there was no effect of impression management on either true or false trauma narratives in a group of offenders (Peace & Bouvier, 2008). Even in cases of deception (false trauma narratives), impression management did not yield a significant main effect on differentiating true from false narratives, in contrast to the bias perspective (Peace & Bouvier, 2008).

As impression management is a deliberate representation of oneself, based on one's own values of what is important, it was expected that under the adaptive perspective, higher impression management would be a motivator of initiative and taking responsibility in the teaching role. This would then be consistent with an internal narrative-based locus of control. In narratives, actions would potentially be able to lead to desired outcomes for the respondent, where they describe how they handled a significant situation, consistent with narrative-ratings. Impression management is, more than any other conceptualization, an active motivation. Past research has conceptualized impression management as a desire for self-control, reflecting a sensitivity to changes in social conditions (Uziel, 2010). This conceptualization is consistent with

the idea of impression management as adaptive, where respondents are attuned to their social environment and willing to adapt to present themselves positively to others. Thus, narratives should be a reflection of what the respondent finds desirable in the context of the time they are completing the narrative. It was expected, similarly to the Marlowe-Crowne conceptualization of adaptiveness, that higher adaptive coping codes on the narratives (at the high end of the distress-coping continuum) would be related to higher levels of impression management.

Self-deception was expected to correspond with universal positive correlations with the positive self-report constructs in the current study (positive affect, coping competence) and universal negative correlations with negative self-report constructs (negative affect, perceived stress reactivity, and beginning teacher experiences), consistent with the bias perspective. Paulhus (1984) stated that self-deception wouldn't be universally negatively correlated to undesirable behaviors, but that someone high in self-deception would be defensive against constructs that would be threatening to their psychological well-being. Self-deception on the BIDR has also been positively correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne scale, but to a lesser degree than impression management (Paulhus, 1984). This finding is consistent with the conceptualization of self-deception as an unconscious bias where the respondent genuinely believes their own distorted self-reports (Paulhus, 1984).

As impression management and self-deception are supposed to represent distinct constructs, a slightly different pattern of correlations was expected. For the purposes of the current study, self-deception was originally not perceived to have an adaptive side because it is outside one's conscious awareness and outside one's control. Self-deception has been found to be negatively associated with self-reported anxiety and depression, thus it would be hypothesized that in the current study there would be an inverse correlational relationship between self-

deception and perceived stress reactivity, as well as between self-deception and the beginning teacher experience scale, similar to the bias view of the other two conceptualizations. Self-deception has also been positively related to resilience and mental health in the literature, so it was hypothesized that self-deception would be positively related to coping competence (Cervellione, Lee, & Conanno, 2009). Positive correlations between self-deception and extraversion have been found in the previous literature, thus it was hypothesized that self-deception would be positively correlated with positive affect (Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002).

Individuals high in self-deception have been reported to rate themselves as having more control over decisions and an expectation that effort leads to positive outcomes (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Thus, it was expected that while self-report questionnaires would be skewed positively, high self-deception scores would therefore be more likely to relate to narrative-based of external locus of control. This was consistent with the bias perspective of social desirability where an individual would rate themselves as having internal locus of control. Self-deception scores have been used to predict overconfidence and overclaiming in past self-report questionnaires (Stöber, Dette, & Musch, 2002). Similarly to the research on impression management, in a study of truthful and fabricated narratives, high self-deception did not yield a main effect on narrative-based scores (Peace & Bouvier, 2008). Therefore, it was expected that self-deception would impact all reports, regardless of mean levels. However, there wouldn't be a strong relationship between narrative codes and self-deception, based on the past literature (Peace & Bouvier, 2008).

Overall, this set of hypotheses aimed to investigate whether the three conceptualizations of social desirability were comparable in how they related to self-rated and narrative-based variables. The current study parsed apart changes between the relationships among social

desirability and the self-report and narrative constructs to elucidate the pattern of relationships contributing to either a bias or adaptive perspective. As individuals have different ideas of what is desirable, it was expected that these notions would align with their self-ratings, as seen through correlations. As narratives have not been researched in the same depth as self-report scales with social desirability, conceptual hypotheses, as laid out in this section were explored to determine what social desirability added to our understand of narrative-based ratings of locus of control and distress.

## **Hypotheses**

Social desirability has previously been conceptualized as a bias where an individual is motivated to exaggerate positive and minimize negative traits of themselves to deceive others. The aim of this study was to partially replicate and to extend this writer's past work in comparing evidence favoring the bias perspective versus the adaptive perspective on social desirability.

*Exploratory analyses:* I looked into the properties of the social desirability scales and the network of correlations among all of the variables and also investigated relations with age, given that research has been mixed on whether or not age impacts social desirability. This study examined the two BIDR subscales separately, as impression management and self-deception have been conceptualized as different constructs, with impression management being more active and deliberate and self-deception being more automatic and outside of conscious awareness. All three conceptualizations of social desirability were investigated in this study to compare evidence supporting the bias and adaptive perspectives. Self-deception was considered maladaptive overall and as a lens that influences all self-reports, without any deliberate choice.

Impression management (BIDR) and need for approval (Marlowe-Crowne), as the more deliberate components of social desirability were hypothesized as adaptive.

1. Self-Report Constructs:

a. Marlowe-Crowne:

i. Bias: When compared to other self-report constructs, it was expected that a respondent high in social desirability on the Marlowe-Crowne would rate themselves highly on culturally approved behaviors and try to minimize their associations with undesirable behaviors. This would manifest in a consistent pattern of **significant negative correlations** with:

1. Negative Affect
2. Perceived Stress Reactivity
3. Teacher Experiences Scale

This would also manifest in a pattern of **significant positive correlations** with:

1. Positive Affect
2. Coping Competence

ii. Adaptive: When compared to other self-report constructs it was expected that a respondent high in social desirability in the adaptive perspective would rate themselves highly on behaviors that they deemed important to their sense-of-self, and lower on behaviors that they didn't believe they exhibit.

This would manifest in a consistent pattern of **significant negative correlations** with:

1. Negative Affect (to a lesser degree than perceived stress reactivity)
2. Perceived Stress Reactivity
3. Teacher Experiences Scale



This would also manifest in a pattern of **no significant correlation** with:

1. Positive Affect

This would manifest in a **significant positive correlation** with

1. Coping Competence

b. Impression Management

i. Bias: As impression management is considered deliberate faking in the bias perspective, it was expected that an individual high in impression management would rate themselves more positively on all positive constructs and more negatively on all negative constructs. This universal pattern was expected to show similar correlations in both directions to the correlations between the Marlowe-Crowne and self-reports, as they are thought to measure similar facets of desirability.

Bias would manifest in a consistent pattern of **significant negative correlations** with:

1. Negative Affect
2. Perceived Stress Reactivity
3. Teacher Experiences Scale

This would also manifest in a pattern of **significant positive correlations** with:

1. Positive Affect
2. Coping Competence

However, as the BIDR was scored continuously as opposed to dichotomously like the Marlowe Crown scale, some differences in the magnitude of correlations may emerge, due to the scoring methodology used.

ii. Adaptive: As with the Marlowe-Crowne scale it was expected that when compared to other self-report constructs, a respondent high in impression management would rate themselves highly on behaviors that they deemed important to their sense-of-self, and lower on behaviors that they didn't believe they exhibited.

This would manifest in a consistent pattern of **significant negative correlations** with:

1. Negative Affect
2. Perceived Stress Reactivity
3. Teacher Experiences Scale

This would also manifest in a pattern of **significant positive correlations** with:

1. Coping Competence

This would also manifest in a pattern of **no significant correlation** with:

1. Positive Affect

### c. Self-Deception

i. Bias: As individuals high in self-deception actually believe their inflated reports, it was expected that self-deception would bias all self-reports.

This would manifest in a consistent pattern of **significant negative correlations** with:

1. Negative Affect
2. Perceived Stress Reactivity
3. Teacher Experiences Scale

This would also manifest in a pattern of **significant positive correlations** with:

1. Positive Affect

## 2. Coping Competence

These correlations were hypothesized to be stronger than the bias correlations of either the Marlowe-Crowne or the Impression Management subscale.

## 3. Narrative-based Constructs

### a. Marlowe-Crowne

i. Nonadaptive: As those high in social desirability would be more beholden to outside perceptions, it was expected that their narratives would be impacted by that external focus. This would manifest in no significant associations between the Marlowe-Crowne and narrative-based LoC, as those high on MC social desirability would rate themselves more favorably on self-report constructs, but the narratives would not reflect these favorable self-perceptions.

1. Past research has not been conducted with the Marlowe-Crowne and open-ended narratives. Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean ratings of narrative distress-coping

ii. Adaptive: The ability to regain one's well-being during times of high stress has a large impact on overall well-being (Tibubos et. al., 2019). Even in the face of external pressures, it was hypothesized that those high in adaptive social desirability would be more likely to find ways to exert some control over their classroom situation as seen in the narrative distress and locus of control ratings.

1. A significant association between the Marlowe-Crowne and narrative-based locus of control. Individuals high on Marlowe-Crowne would be more likely than individuals low on the Marlowe-Crowne to have **internal** narrative-based locus of control.

2. Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean ratings of narrative distress-coping. This hypothesis was exploratory, as past research has not been conducted with the Marlowe-Crowne and open-ended narratives. For Marlowe-Crowne scores to be adaptive it was expected that high mean Marlowe-Crowne scores would coincide with high mean distress-coping continuum scores, with high mean MC scores being defined as scores above the mean value for the current sample.

b. Impression Management: As impression management is hypothesized to be a desire to control others' perceptions, it was hypothesized that impression management would be related to:

i. Nonadaptive:

1. A significant association between impression management and narrative-based locus of control. Individuals high on impression management would be more likely to have no significant associations between the Marlowe-Crowne and narrative-based LoC, as those high on MC social desirability would rate themselves more favorably on self-report constructs, but the narratives would not reflect these favorable self-perceptions.

2. Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean ratings of narrative distress-coping. This analysis was exploratory, as past research has not been conducted with impression management and open-ended narratives.

ii. Adaptive: As impression management is a deliberate representation of oneself, based on one's own values of what is important, it was expected that narrative ratings would reflect one's own values. As a teacher, one would want to exercise autonomy in the classroom for the benefit of students. This would manifest in:

1. A significant association between impression management and narrative-based locus of control. Individuals high on impression management would be more likely than individuals low on the impression management to have **internal** narrative-based locus of control.

2. Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean ratings of narrative distress-coping. This analysis was exploratory, as past research has not been conducted with impression management and open-ended narratives. For impression management to be adaptive it was expected that high mean impression management would coincide with high mean distress-coping continuum scores.

c. Self-Deception

i. Nonadaptive: no significant associations between the Marlowe-Crowne and narrative-based LoC, as those high on MC social desirability would rate themselves more favorably on self-report constructs, but the narratives would not reflect these favorable self-perceptions.

a. While it was expected that conceptually self-deception would be maladaptive and hence align with external narrative-based locus of control, past research showed association with indices of well-being, such as lower depression. Therefore, there may be an adaptive component to self-deception, which would argue for expecting it to be related to internal narrative-based locus of control.

2. Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean ratings of narrative distress-coping. This analysis was exploratory, as past research had not been conducted with impression management and open-ended narratives.

## **Statement of Problem**

This study examined specific relations hypothesized as supportive of the definition of social desirability as a bias or as adaptive in light of the context of teaching during the pandemic. This study sought to weigh evidence to clarify the role of social desirability in responding to other self-report measures and to narrative-based reports about what stands out as significant about one's experiences during COVID. Each of the three conceptualizations of social desirability: a need for approval, self-deception and impression management, have shown different patterns of relations with other positive and negative self-report constructs in prior research. However, relations with more open-ended narrative-based reports have not been thoroughly studied. This study was part of a larger project with the Temperament and Narratives lab designed to further understand the concept of social desirability as a bias that reduces validity of other self-report measures or as a lens that influences responses, whether self-report or narrative, in ways that may be more or less adaptive.

## **Design**

The study used survey data collected from a sample of United States Pre-K-12 teachers for three months: between January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Data were collected just before and during the initial COVID-19 vaccine rollout and before the Delta or Omicron variants became the dominant strain of the coronavirus (Goldstein & Scheiber, 2022). There was an active debate going on about whether or not teachers should go back in-person. Surveys were completed at a specific point of the pandemic, where teachers were in the middle of negotiations about returning to school (Goldstein & Scheiber, 2022). Data were obtained virtually and anonymously through social media posts from Temperament and Narratives lab members and their networks on platforms such as *Facebook*, *Nextdoor*, and *Reddit*. Teachers were not

compensated for participating, potentially impacting the ultimate number of teachers who completed all of the measures. Teachers completed questionnaires on social desirability, affect, perceived stress reactivity, coping competence, and open-ended questions on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic via the survey platform Qualtrics. Teachers also completed demographic measures, with questions about age, race, gender, geographic areas, type of school, and number of years in the profession.

The study aimed to extend previous research that frames social desirability as an adaptive motivation for social evaluation. This new definition was supported by findings with student-teachers in the University of Maryland College Park's Elementary Education program. This study extended that research in several ways: 1. The prior study used the Marlowe-Crowne exclusively, and the current study utilized the Marlowe-Crowne and the BIDR; 2. The prior study did not include narratives, and the current study did; 3. The prior study used intern teachers finishing their undergraduate teaching program, while the current study utilized full-time professional teachers. Neither sample was considered to be representative of all teachers in the U.S.

## **Participants**

The sample consisted of 177 professional PreK-12 teachers across the United States, 90 who completed all items in the questionnaire (considered full responses), and 87 who completed some items in the questionnaire (considered partial questionnaires). 32 additional individuals consented, but did not attempt any items of the survey and have been excluded. Partial questionnaire responses ranged from those who completed demographics only to those who completed a portion of the quantitative and qualitative responses. The exact number of each questionnaire completed is further clarified in Table #3. Participants who only completed

demographics, and those who only consented will be excluded from the ultimate analyses, leaving partial responses to consider only those who completed at least one full questionnaire. Of the 87 partial responses, 45 completed demographics, the first PANAS, and one or two short answer questions; 17 completed the demographics only; 12 completed the demographics and PANAS 1; 6 completed the entire survey with the exception of the BIDR and the second PANAS; 5 completed the demographics, PANAS 1, and some short answer questions or the Reynolds short form of the Marlowe-Crowne scale; and 2 completed the entire survey with the exception of the second PANAS. In terms of gender, 84.7% of the full sample was female, compared to 76% in the general United States public school system (79 full responses, 71 partial responses), 13.6% was male, compared to 24% of the general U.S. public school system (11 full responses, 13 partial responses), and 1.7% was gender non-conforming (3 partials) (“Characteristics of Public School Teachers”, 2021). The participants ranged in age from 20 to 65 years old, with 32% participants being in their 20s, 37% in their 30s, 18% being in their 40s, 8% being in their 50s, and 3% being in their 60s. In comparison, the average age of a US public schoolteacher is 44 (“Characteristics of Public School Teachers”, 2021). Participants were mostly (86%) non-Hispanic White, compared with 79% of US public school teachers (“Characteristics of Public School Teachers”, 2021). Overall, 37 states were represented, with Maryland being the most represented state in the sample (28% of the sample). In terms of school grade level, 34% of the sample taught in elementary schools (Grades 1-5), 29% taught in high schools (Grades 9-12), 21% taught in middle schools (Grades 6-8), and 15% taught in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. The participants ranged in number of years teaching from 0 (first year teaching) to 40. Overall, the majority of current teachers, 42.7%, have been teaching for 15+ years, with 23.7% teaching for 4-9 years, 19.5% teaching for 10-14 years and 14.2% teaching for 0-4 years.



The average number of years taught in this sample was about 10, while the national average is about 14 (“Characteristics of Public School Teachers”, 2021).

## **Procedures**

Participants were recruited through social media networks between January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Members of the Temperaments and Narratives lab at the University of Maryland posted the Qualtrics link and a recruitment blurb on their own *Facebook* profiles, as well as *Nextdoor*, and members of their networks shared the posts as well. I posted on my personal *Facebook* profile and networks, as well as *Nextdoor*, *Instagram*, and several *Reddit* groups designed for teachers, as well as some state *Reddit* pages, and *Reddit* pages devoted to Coronavirus discussions and research. The survey was designed to be completed in one session, and participants were not required to provide any identifying information in the survey. As the data manager, I was the only person with access to the Qualtrics responses for confidentiality. Three responses were deleted upon receipt as they were pranks (two answered the short-answer questions exclusively with jokes, and one commented on my original *Reddit* post that he was submitting a fake response). No compensation was offered for participation in this study.

## **Measures**

**Social Desirability.** To test levels of social desirability in the current sample I employed the 13-item Reynolds short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne Scale as well as the BIDR-16, a short form of the BIDR, by Hart et. al. Short-forms of both scales were more practical, due to the number of measures used in this study. The properties of both scales will be described for this sample.

### *Marlowe-Crowne Scale*

The original Marlowe-Crowne Scale consisted of 47 socially desirable and undesirable true/false statements, with an internal consistency of .88 using the Kuder-Richardson formula of dichotomous choices for a small ( $n=39$ ) sample of college students (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). In 1982 Reynolds developed a 13-item version of the Marlowe-Crowne scale utilizing the full Marlowe-Crowne scale, and three short forms: an 11-item, a 12-item, and a 13-item, with 608 undergraduate students (Reynolds, 1982). The 13-item scale related most strongly to the original Marlowe-Crowne scale,  $r=.93$ , with a slightly lower internal consistency (.76) using the Kuder-Richardson formula, potentially due to the larger sample (Reynolds, 1982). The Marlowe-Crowne scale is meant to be scored dichotomously, with items worded in an extreme manner to detect endorsers with a tendency to be overly positive in their own self-estimation. Some sample items from the Reynolds short-form include: “I am always willing to admit when I make a mistake” and “I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.” The dichotomous nature of the scale may have impacted the internal consistency in the current sample, particularly if items were less relevant to current participants than those whom the scale and its short-forms were validated on.

#### *Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR)*

The BIDR was developed to test a two-factor model of impression management and self-deception, based on previous research conceptualizing social desirability as a two-factor construct comprised of both conscious and unconscious motivations (Paulhus, 1984). The original BIDR consisted of 40 socially desirable and undesirable statements on a seven-point Likert scale, that could be scored continuously or dichotomously (with scores of 1-5 considered false, and scores of 6-7 considered true) (Cervellione, Lee, Bonanno, 2009;

Paulhus, 1984). Items were taken from past scales of social desirability such as the Marlowe-Crowne scale, Edwards scale, self-deception scale and other-deception scale previously used as measures of social desirability (Paulhus, 1984). Paulhus took these measures and used factor analytic research from the development of those scales to develop the BIDR (Paulhus, 1984). Some sample items that tap into the concept of impression management are: “I never cover up my mistakes” and “I don't gossip about other people's business”, while sample items that tap into the concept of self-deception are: “I always know why I like things” and “I never regret my decisions.”

In 2014 Hart et. al. developed a 16-item version of the BIDR by shortening it across four different studies while maintaining its two-factor structure through confirmatory factor analyses (Hart, et. al., 2014). The 16-item scale matched the BIDR in internal consistency, with both the self-deception and impression management subscales, having reliabilities of between .64 and .73 (Hart, et. al., 2014). In the current study, one item was removed from the self-deception subscale (“I have never doubted my ability as a lover”) was removed due to concerns about it being irrelevant and awkward for the potential sample. Similarly to the Reynolds short-form, the BIDR-16 was more practical for this study, due to the length of the questionnaire.

**Perceived Stress Reactivity.** To test levels of perceived stress reactivity in the current sample I employed the Perceived Stress Reactivity Scale (PSRS). The PSRS is a 23-item scale comprised of five subscales in addition to the overall scale, that was evaluated with 2,040 individuals from the United Kingdom, from the United States, and Germany (Schlotz, et. al, 2011). The five subscales are: prolonged reactivity (trouble calming down after an intense workload), reactivity to failure (feeling irritated, upset, or sad in response to failure), reactivity to work overload

(feeling worried and annoyed in response to heavy workload), reactivity to social conflicts (feeling irritated and upset in response to social disapproval and rejection), and reactivity to social evaluation (decreased confidence due to social evaluation) (Schlotz, et. al, 2011).

Response options range from one to three with response options to items indicating that the respondent generally doesn't have the problem being described, sometimes or usually has the problem being described or often having the problem described (Schlotz, et. al., 2011). For example, one item is: When tasks build up to the extent that they are hard to manage... the responses are (1) I am generally untroubled, (2) I usually feel a little uneasy and (3) I normally get quite nervous (Schlotz, et. al., 2011). These subscales have shown internal consistencies between .70 and .80 (Schlotz, et. al, 2011). Perceived stress reactivity was expected to relate to perceived self-efficacy, neuroticism, depression, and sleep problems, with the prolonged reactivity subscale being most robustly related to sleep quality (Schlotz, et. al, 2011). In their validation, the authors found that the PSRS was, as expected, related to symptoms of depression and sleep issues, especially when there are increased levels of chronic stress (Schlotz, et. al, 2011). Scores on the PSRS, both overall and its subscales, were marginally negatively correlated with social desirability in the U.S. and U.K. samples, but these associations did not significantly impact validity (Schlotz, et. al, 2011). The properties of the PSRS were described in this sample.

**Positive and Negative Affect.** To test levels of positive and negative affect in the current sample I employed the Positive and Negative Affect schedule (PANAS). The PANAS was originally created to fill a gap in valid and reliable measures of affect, and negative affect individually is related to stress and poor coping skills (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). The PANAS is a 20-item scale, which was validated by randomly sprinkling in the 20 PANAS terms in a 60-item mood questionnaire (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). The 20-items are single mood words,

where respondents rate the extent to which they have felt those moods in a specific time period (i.e. within the last week or within the last month) on a five-point Likert scale (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). After the original validation, the PANAS was investigated without any other items, and the same results were found, along with internal consistencies of .86-90 for positive affect and .85-.87 for negative affect, regardless of the time instructions used (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). In addition, the positive and negative affect scales share one to five percent of the variance, and the inverse correlations between them were between -.12 and -.23 (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). The properties of the PANAS were described in this sample.

**Coping Competence Questionnaire.** To test levels of coping competence in the current sample I employed the Coping Competence Questionnaire (CCQ). Originally, the Coping Competence Questionnaire was created to determine resistance to depression (Schroder & Ollis, 2012). The authors of the questionnaire analyzed a series of variables, including the Big 5 Personality Factors, depression, different coping styles, with five subsamples in order to investigate the construct validity of the scale before developing their 12-item scale (Schroder & Ollis, 2012). The internal consistency of the scale ranged between .90 and .94, and test-retest reliability from one sample was .84 one month later (Schroder & Ollis, 2012). The CCQ is scored on a Likert scale with response options ranging from (1) “Very Uncharacteristic of Me” to (6) “Very Characteristic of Me.” Sample items include: “I become easily discouraged by failures” and “I often feel unable to deal with problems.” The properties of the CCQ were described in this sample.

**Teacher Experiences Scale.** To test reported symptoms of anxiety and depression in the current study, I utilized a portion of the Teacher Experiences Scale. This questionnaire was developed by the Temperament and Narratives Lab for a previous study working with student-teachers from

the University of Maryland's Elementary Education Program. The first portion of the scale is very specific to student-teaching, so only the second portion of fifteen questions, which asks about depression and anxiety symptoms was utilized. The Teacher Experiences Scale is scored on a Likert scale with response options ranging from (1) Does Not Apply to (8) Always. Sample items include: "Feeling Unable to Cope" and "Feeling Physically Exhausted" designed to address some symptoms of mental health concerns such as anxiety and depression. The properties of the Teacher Experiences Scale were described in this sample.

### **Narrative Measures:**

***Question 1: What stands out as significant about your experience with COVID? Is there anything you would like to share about the implications of your experiences for educational practice in the future?***

To further investigate the impact of COVID-19 on participant teachers in this sample, I devised this open-ended question to probe for what teachers' big takeaways were so far in the pandemic. The question was left broad so teachers could reflect on whatever aspect of the pandemic was most salient for them. Areas for coding were further developed after responses were received. Theoretically, coding for this question came from prior research on what teachers find desirable in their careers (e.g. the desire for degrees of autonomy in practice) as well as prior research on Locus of Control. Responses ranged in length, however, previous research has not found a connection between length of narratives and social desirability (Nelson et. al. 2009). Previous work using coded narratives in comparison to self-ratings of coping (but not with social desirability) has used narrative codes of meaning-making, specifically themes of the narratives and personal meaning of respondents (Tibubos et. al., 2019). Narratives in the current study were also coded for meaning making, specifically in looking at coping and locus of control.

### *Coding Procedures for Locus of Control:*

I coded narrative responses dichotomously as either external or internal locus of control and trained a reliability coder (another graduate student in the Temperaments and Narratives lab) to establish reliability. To establish reliability, the reliability coder and I coded the first five narratives together, and then broke responses into batches of 10 to 20 to code the remaining narratives. Any responses that could not be coded (for example, 3 responses said N/A and one response said “COVID-19”) were excluded from these analyses. That way, any issues with the coding framing that arise can be addressed before continuing to code the rest of the narratives (O’Conner & Joffe, 2020). The author coded all 118, with the independent reliability coder coding 66 narratives for Locus of Control. Past research has indicated that reliability coding of about 10-25% of narratives is typical (O’Conner & Joffe, 2020). Minimum reliability was 80% agreement, with the goal to establish 90% reliability for the codes. Discrepancies in the codes were reconciled, and reliability reached 95% for the final batch of codes.

### *Coding Procedures for Narrative Coping*

Responses were coded on a spectrum of adaptiveness on a 4-point scale with (0) indicating getting by (a narrative with a vague positive takeaway and no specific mechanisms of action), (1) indicating global distress (overall distress and global concerns), (2) indicating specific distress (distress related to the respondent’s own life), and (3) indicating action-oriented coping (where the respondent reflects on actions they took to address the situation). This continuum was relevant to the current study due to the context of COVID, with one extreme being global, non specific distress and the other being adaptive in finding proactive ways to navigate the situation. Responses at the lower end of the continuum were less adaptive, and responses coded at the higher end of the continuum were more adaptive. Getting by, where respondents offered

narratives with a vague positive solution, sans personal action, represented the maladaptive bias view, where an individual had no agency. For teachers especially, as previously reviewed, this can contribute to general feelings of stress and a lack of well-being. Action-oriented coping, where a respondent reflected on actions they took to address the situation they found significant, represented the adaptive view, where the individual took some agency even in situations where it was difficult to find autonomy. For teachers, as previously reviewed, finding ways to be creative and autonomous is critical for overall well-being. Within these two extremes narratives were rated on the 0-3 continuum. The same five narratives that were coded for initial reliability for narrative-based locus of control were coded on the distress-coping continuum. Subsequently, 110 of the narratives were reliability coded for coping, with the raters reaching 89% reliability on the final batch. Further descriptions of these codes as well as examples are featured in the Appendix.

Table 2

*Number of Responses for Each Measure*

Measure	Number of Responses
PANAS 1	160
Marlowe-Crowne	100
BIDR	92
PSRS	98
CCQ	98
Beginner Teacher Experiences Scale	98
PANAS 2	90

## Data Analytic Plan

Patterns to support both perspectives were tested with a mixed methods approach using correlational analyses and group comparisons based on the narrative codes.

**Correlational Analyses:** Correlational analyses were run to compare each conceptualization of social desirability (Marlowe-Crowne’s need for approval, and the BIDR’s impression



management and self-deception) and the positive versus negative quantitative constructs used in this study.

Table 3: Correlational Patterns Expected

Self-Rating	Correlation Pattern with SD Measures Expected/Bias perspective	Correlation Pattern with SD Measures Expected/Adaptive
Negative Affect	Negative	Negative/None
Perceived Stress Reactivity	Negative	Negative
Beginning Teachers Experience Scale	Negative	Negative
Positive Affect	Positive	None
Coping Competence	Positive	Positive

**Mean Differences Analyses:** Low and High social desirability groups were compared with respect to mean differences in narrative ratings of distress and coping. This analysis was exploratory as no hypothesis was offered given the dearth of prior research conducted with social desirability and open-ended narratives. All three social desirability conceptualizations were examined separately with narrative-based distress-coping. This adaptiveness spectrum was coded on a 4-point scale. Low and High social desirability groups were used to examine whether social desirability was associated with less or with more adaptive narrative responses. It was expected that there would not be a relationship between social desirability and narrative responses in the bias, or maladaptive perspective. It was expected that under the adaptive perspective, social desirability would be associated with the narrative responses.

## Chapter 4: Results

The current study aimed to parse apart the pattern of relations among social desirability, self-report and narratives to clarify whether social desirability could operate as a motivation that

may be adaptive in some context. Correlational analyses were run to investigate patterns of relations between each of the three social desirability conceptualizations, Marlowe-Crowne (MC), Impression Management (IM), Self-Deception (SD), and various self-report questionnaires, including perceived stress reactivity, positive and negative affect, and coping competence, as well as with narratives coded for locus of control (LoC) and coping. If social desirability represented a bias, it would be expected to distort self-reports, as opposed to being a potential source of information about the respondent. Particularly in the case of IM and MC, social desirability was conceptualized as an active response choice, so the individual would be consciously deciding to fake responses. This more deliberate bias was more likely to play out if respondents were aware of what was being communicated, as with self-reports. In contrast, open-ended narratives reduced this potential biasing effect, particularly if since respondents were unaware of how the narrative information would be evaluated. Thus, narrative-based measures of locus of control and coping were also investigated. If social desirability were adaptive, it was expected that higher social desirability on the IM and MC would be related to internal locus of control, as seen in previous self-report research (Gianakos, 2002). Similarly, if social desirability were adaptive, it would be expected that higher social desirability on IM and MC would be related to higher ratings on coping on the narrative-based coping measure. However, if these patterns were not found it does not signal support for the bias perspective, as any relation with narratives suggested that social desirability was a source of information. However, investigating the relations with narratives helped clarify the extent to which certain definitions of social desirability influenced the adaptiveness with which respondents conceptualized their experiences in narratives.

Properties, such as internal consistency, means, and standard deviations of each of the measures used in this study will be described and then patterns of correlations will be discussed.

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

#### *Properties of the Social Desirability Measures*

This study investigated the properties of two measures of social desirability: the Marlowe-Crowne (MC) Scale of Social Desirability, and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR-16), which is broken into two subscales that capture different aspects of social desirability (Impression Management and Self-Deception). Cronbach's alphas, a measure of internal consistency of a set of items, were computed for the Reynolds short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne Scale, and the two subscales of the BIDR-16. Cronbach's alpha is communicated as a number between 0 and 1, with numbers closer to one indicating higher reliability, and stronger interrelations between test items (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). In addition, a higher alpha indicates lower potential for the obtained test score in a group to be primarily attributable to measurement error (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Generally, alphas above .75 have been considered acceptable, with .90 being ideal (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

##### *i. Reynolds MC Short-Form*

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Short Form of Reynolds MC (13 true-false items) for this study's sample was .564, whereas the alpha coefficient for the Reynolds' original short-form was reported to be .76 for a sample of six hundred (Reynolds, 1980). In my previous work, Cronbach's alpha for the Short Form was ( $\alpha=.616$ ) (Travis, 2020). The alpha coefficient for the original 33-item Marlowe-Crowne scale was .88, using the Kuder-Richardson formula in a sample of 39 (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The lower internal consistency of the Reynolds MC

may have limited the relationships found between the MC and the self-report and narratives measures, as seen in the correlational relationships found.

*ii. BIDR-16*

The overall internal consistency of the BIDR-16 in the current study was  $\alpha=.703$ , using continuous scoring. The internal consistency of the Impression Management subscale found in this study ( $\alpha=.729$ ) was similar to that in the original 16-item scale validation by Hart et. al. (2014) ( $\alpha=.73$ ). In contrast, the internal consistency of the self-deception subscale in this study was low ( $\alpha=.538$ ). comparable with Hart's findings ( $\alpha=.64$ ). As explained further in the Methods section, one of the items on the self-deception subscale was removed in the current study, however, it is unlikely that this explains the low internal consistency. Using a Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, which allows for the prediction of reliability for a scale after changing the length of the test (de Vet et. al., 2017), reliability did increase when an additional item was added. According to this formula, when adding one additional item to the self-deception scale (8 items as opposed to 7), the reliability of the scale would increase to .71.

*iii. Overall Conclusions on Alphas*

Overall, the Impression Management subscale appeared to be the most reliable of the social desirability measures for the current sample. In the original validations, the Reynolds MC had the highest reliability (.76), followed by IM (.73).

*Means and Standard Deviations of Social Desirability Measures*

Table 4 displays the means and standard deviations of the variables in this study. In the current study the Marlowe-Crowne scale had a mean of 7.04 and a standard deviation of 2.38,

whereas the original Reynolds short form had a mean of 5.67 and a standard deviation of 3.20 (Reynolds, 1982). The BIDR-16 validation used a range of 1-8 (based on dichotomous scoring), however, continuous scoring has been reported to have a higher reliability. Thus, to approximate means for the continuous scoring used in the current study, mean values from the original dichotomous BIDR-16 validation were multiplied by the number of items used for each subscale (8 items for each subscale). In Hart's original validation, items were presented continuously and then scored dichotomously (e.g., participants responded with a score of 1-7, if scores were 4-7, then they were rated as a 1, if they were lower, they were rated as a 0). Based on this transformation, the self-deception subscale of the BIDR-16 had a mean of 30.27 and a standard deviation of 5.48, while Hart (2015)'s BIDR-16 self-deception subscale had a mean of 31.43 and a standard deviation of 7.63. The impression management subscale of the BIDR-16 in the current study had a mean of 37.41 and a standard deviation of 7.74, while the Hart (2015)'s BIDR-16 impression management subscale had a mean of 34.4 and a standard deviation of 9.52, based on the continuous scoring transformation (Hart, 2015).

#### *Means and Standard Deviations of Other Self-Report Measures of the Current Study*

This section will describe the means and standard deviations of the positive and negative self-report constructs used in the current study.

##### *i. PANAS*

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) included separate subscales for positive and negative affect. For further details on means and standard deviations please see Table 4 below. The mean for positive affect in this study was 26.32 and the standard deviation was 8.38, whereas in the original PANAS validation, the mean for positive affect was 29.7 with a standard deviation of 7.9 (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The mean for negative affect in this

study was 19.48 with a standard deviation of 8.81, whereas in the original PANAS validation the mean was 14.8 and the standard deviation was 5.4 (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

ii. *CCQ*

For the Coping Competence Questionnaire (CCQ), the mean in this study was 32.91 and the standard deviation was 12.37, whereas in the original validation sample it was 49.78 with a standard deviation of 11.63 (Schroder & Ollis, 2013). Correlational scores on the CCQ used in the current study were reversed for clarity, so that higher scores on the CCQ indicated better coping competence in the current sample. However, for means and standard deviations, scores were kept the same, so that the lower mean indicates better coping competence.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of Scales Used in this Study

Construct	Internal Consistency	Minimum- Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skew	Standard Error
Social Desirability						
MC:	$\alpha = .564$	1-12	7.039	2.384	-.235	.239
IM:	$\alpha = .729$	10-55	37.411	7.736	-.656	.247
SDE:	$\alpha = .538$	18-43	30.273	5.478	-.091	.247
Perceived Stress Reactivity	$\alpha = .859$	6-41	23.469	7.42551	.393	.244
Coping Competence	$\alpha = .935$	12-65	32.906	12.366	.731	.246
Teacher Experiences	$\alpha = .897$	34-104	65.721	15.3778	.981	.188
Positive Affect	$\alpha = .906$	10-39	26.323	8.378	.266	.191
Negative Affect	$\alpha = .916$	10-36	19.479	8.815	.981	.188

*Correlations Among Measures of Social Desirability*

All of the social desirability scales used for this study were correlated with each other to varying degrees, as seen in Table 5, as would be expected because the MC was used as a basis for development of the BIDR. Typically, IM and MC are more highly correlated than MC and SD, or IM and SD (Furnham, Petrides, Spencer-Bowdage, 2002; Hart, 2015). A similar pattern emerged in this study. The two most highly correlated scales were the Marlowe-Crowne short-form (representing need for approval) and the impression management (representing a conscious effort to manage the perceptions of others) subscale of the BIDR-16 ( $r = .669$ ,  $p < .001$ ). To a lesser degree, the self-deception subscale was correlated with the impression management subscale of the BIDR-16 ( $r = .236$ ,  $p = .022$ ) and with the Marlowe-Crowne scale ( $r = .253$ ,  $p = .016$ ).

### ***Hypothesis Testing***

This study aimed to investigate the merit of three definitions of social desirability (Marlowe-Crowne's overall need for approval and Paulhus' impression management and self-deception) with respect to two main questions: Are the constructs as measured comparable in their relations with constructs measured with other variables (self-report and narrative), and do these relations support a bias or adaptive perspective of social desirability?

The first hypothesis concerned the relationship of each measured conceptualization of social desirability with several self-reported variables including: positive and negative affect, perceived stress reactivity, coping competence, and teaching experiences.

The second hypothesis concerned the relationship of each measured conceptualization of social desirability with locus of control and coping coded from narratives.

### ***Hypothesis 1:***

To constitute a bias, it was expected that there would be a consistent pattern of significant positive correlations between social desirability and positive self-rated characteristics (such as coping and positive affect), and a consistent pattern of negative correlations between social desirability and negative self-rated characteristics (such as negative affect and perceived stress reactivity). To constitute a bias, it was also expected that social desirability would impact all self-reports equally (in either a positive or negative direction), no matter the definition used. The following pattern was hypothesized as supporting the adaptive perspective; 1. social desirability would have inverse relations with negative constructs such as negative affect and perceived stress reactivity, but the magnitude of these relations would differ based on the construct, as seen in my previous research (Travis, 2020); and 2. social desirability would have a positive relationship with coping and no relationship with positive affect, as positive affect has not been shown to be adaptive in teachers, despite its desirability (Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018). Correlations were conducted using Pearson Correlations in the statistical software SPSS version 29.0.0. As seen in Table 5, patterns of correlations varied depending on the definition of social desirability used. Correlations supportive of the adaptive perspective were bolded. As seen in Table 5, whereas correlations with self-deception were often keyed in the same direction as those of with MC or IM scales, the correlations were in almost every case significant, but did not display the variation expected under the adaptive perspective. Hence, Hypothesis 1 was supported, because significant patterns of correlations with self-reports differed under the definition of social desirability used.

Table 5: Correlational Patterns Across Constructs



Positive/Negative Construct	MC Correlation	IM Correlation	SD Correlation	LoC Correlation	Narrative Coping Correlation
Positive Affect (+)	<b>.187</b>	<b>.179</b>	<b>.042</b>	.101	-.120
Negative Affect (-)	<b>-.209*</b>	<b>-.190</b>	<b>-.211*</b>	-.113	.050
Coping Competence <sup>+</sup> (+)	<b>.287**</b>	<b>.230*</b>	<b>.525**</b>	.116	.244*
Teacher Experience (-)	<b>-.330**</b>	<b>-.240*</b>	<b>-.287**</b>	-.119	-.091
PSRS: (-)	-.287**	-.169	-.671**	-.062	-.167
Prolonged:	-.110	.130	-.520**	-.053	-.176
Work Overload:	<b>-.265**</b>	-.150	-.535**	-.171	-.110
Social Conflict	<b>-.316**</b>	<b>-.372**</b>	-.474**	.195	-.055
Failure:	-.037	-.056	-.400**	.081	-.124
Social Evaluation:	-.171	-.094	-.483**	-.171	-.154
Narrative-Based Locus of Control	-.057	-.291**	.144	-	.375**
Narrative-Based Coping	-.065	-.206	<b>.226*</b>	.375**	

\*=significant at the .05 level      \*\*=significant at the .001 level    <sup>+</sup>CCQ scores signs reversed for clarity so that higher scores indicate better coping    **Correlations supporting the adaptive perspective bolded** (+) indicates a positive construct (-) indicates a negative construct

**Affect.** The patterns of relations of the different measures of social desirability were similar with positive affect but varied with negative affect. Consistent with the adaptive perspective, there was no relationship between any of the three measures of social desirability and positive affect. Consistent with both perspectives, there was an inverse correlation between two measures of social desirability and negative affect, with the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the self-deception subscale correlations being significant at the .05 level.

**Coping Competence.** All three social desirability measures showed significant ( $p < .001$ ) correlations with coping competence, indicating that those with higher social desirability had higher coping competence. This finding was consistent with both bias and adaptive perspectives.

**Teacher Experiences Scale.** On the teacher experiences scale (which measured negative emotional states such as anxiety and depression) all three measures showed significant inverse correlations, consistent with both bias and adaptive perspectives.

**Perceived Stress Reactivity.** Within the PSRS, there were patterns of correlations among the specific subscales that gave credence to the adaptive perspective of social desirability as hypothesized for the Marlowe Crowne and Impression Management subscales. Consistent with my previous work (Travis, 2020), it was hypothesized that there would be differing magnitudes of correlations within the specific PSRS subscales. This would fit in with the adaptive perspective, as instead of universal negative correlations, consistent with a more generalized bias, respondents would reject the specific subscales that related to their personal values. In my previous work, this was seen in student teachers endorsing significantly more reactivity to dimensions of stress reactivity related to high workloads and social criticism, than reactivity to prolonged feelings of stress or reactivity to failure (Travis, 2020). Thus, student teachers endorsed higher reactivity to dimensions of stress that were directly related to their current teaching situation, consistent with the adaptive perspective. Each PSRS subscale measures a different dimension of situation stress: prolonged reactivity, social evaluation, social conflict, reactivity to failure and work overload. There were different magnitudes of correlations within the PSRS subscales depending on the social desirability measure used. Consistent with the bias perspective, there were significant (at the .001 level) inverse correlations between all subscales of the PSRS and the self-deception subscale, with the smallest correlation being -.400,

and the largest being  $-.671$ ). In contrast, and consistent with the adaptive perspective, only the work overload and social conflict subscales were significantly inversely correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne scale, and only the social conflict subscale was significantly inversely correlated with the impression management subscale. These results were consistent with adaptive perspective because, depending on the social desirability conceptualization, respondents endorsed specific subscales of the PSRS as opposed to other, consistent with the stresses observed in the narratives, and with the general context of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time.

The direction of the correlational results was consistent with the idea of social desirability as a positive self-presentation, however, this self-presentation seemed to be more focused on diminishing negative presentation (e.g. presenting with lower stress reactivity and negative affect) as opposed to emphasizing positive constructs (e.g., presenting with higher positive affect).

### **Hypothesis 2:**

The second hypothesis concerned the relations between social desirability and narrative-based ratings of locus of control and narrative-based ratings of distress/coping. It was hypothesized that for social desirability to be adaptive, there would be a positive relationship between higher social desirability levels (defined as higher than the overall mean social desirability value) and narrative-based internal locus of control, as well as a positive relationship between higher social desirability and narrative-based coping (with higher narrative-based coping scores being more adaptive). This hypothesis was exploratory, given lack of previous research using these social desirability scales and open-ended narratives that capture how the individual thinks and talks about experiences, which includes their sense of agency (locus of control and coping with distress). Since coded narratives were not expected to be subject to bias,

patterns of associations were not attributable to the biasing effects of social desirability but to the correlational and predictive relations between social desirability and narrative self-organization.

### **Distribution of Narrative Locus of Control and Distress-Coping Codes**

Of the 122 codable narratives, 85.2% were coded as external locus of control ( $n=104$ ) and 14.8% were coded as internal locus of control ( $n= 18$ ). The distress-coping continuum ranged from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating “Getting By”, 1 indicating “Global Distress”, 2 indicating “Specific Distress”, and 3 indicating “Active Coping.” Of 122 codable narratives 23.8% ( $n= 29$ ) were coded 0, 35.2% ( $n=43$ ) were coded 1, 33.6% ( $n=41$ ) were coded 2, and 7.4% ( $n=9$ ) were coded 4. The mean for this sample was 1.246 and the standard deviation was .899, indicating that overall, this sample had low narrative-based coping.

### **Narrative-Based Constructs: Correlational Analyses**

Correlational analyses were conducted to evaluate the associations between the three conceptualizations of social desirability and narrative-based coping. Narrative-based coping was not associated with Impression Management or the Marlowe-Crowne, however it was related to Self-Deception ( $r= .226, p= .05$ ). Thus, higher self-deception was related to better overall narrative coping in the current sample, as seen in Table 5, in contrast to the hypothesis.

Correlational Analyses were also run to evaluate the association between the other self-report constructs and narrative-based coping. The only correlation that reached significance was between narrative-based coping and the Coping Competence Questionnaire (CCQ), as seen in Table 5, which supported the coding procedures used in this study ( $r= .244, p= .05$ ). Higher narrative-based coping was related to better self-rated coping competence.

#### *Narrative-Based Locus of Control.*

Correlational analyses were also used to analyze the relationship between narrative-based locus of control and each of the three measures of social desirability. Of the three measures, only impression management was significantly correlated with narrative-based locus of control ( $r = -.291, p < .001$ ), indicating that in the current sample, higher impression management was associated with external locus of control. Narrative-based locus of control was not significantly correlated with either the Marlowe-Crowne or self-deception subscales.

#### *Supplementary Analyses for Narrative-Based Locus of Control*

To further examine the relations between external and internal narrative-based locus of control codes with the self-report variables in the current study, independent samples t-tests were conducted comparing participants coded as having internal versus external locus of control codes in relation to the self-reported measures.

In independent samples t-tests, those with external locus of control had greater overall stress reactivity, and lower coping competence. For the Social Evaluation subscale of the PSRS, results approached significance with a higher overall mean (indicating more reactivity to social evaluation) for those with external locus of control (significance = .068). For the overall PSRS, results were significant with a higher overall mean (indicating more overall reactivity) for those with an external locus of control (significance = .040). For Coping Competence, those with external locus of control showed worse coping competence than those with internal locus of control (significance = .053). These results are consistent with past work on locus of control, where internal locus of control is more adaptive. Narrative-based locus of control was not related to either dimension of affect, indicating that the overall emotionality of participants, whether positive or negative, did not influence the degree of internality and control with which they described their experiences.

## ***Age-Based Analyses***

### *Sub-Population Mean Differences by Age:*

Mean differences in self-report measures across age as a grouping variable were investigated using independent samples t-tests. Age categories were created by grouping participants by age decade (e.g., age 20s, age 30s, etc.). Mean differences were conducted as opposed to correlational analyses, as the aim of these analyses was to clarify whether there were significant differences in the self-ratings of participants in this study depending on their age. Recent research (Ausmees et. al., 2022) has found that using mean differences to examine age differences in socially desirable responding in self and other-reports of personality can be more informative than correlations, as mean differences allow researchers to see if individuals do systematically change their response patterns by age. Developmental patterns in desirable responding have been observed in older age cohorts (Ausmess et. al., 2022). Using age cohorts of 10 years (20-29, 30-39) has also been seen in prior research with teachers, and, for teachers, age and years of experience tend to go together (Taylor, 2016). Further information on the means and standard deviations by age cohort can be found in the Appendix.

In the current study, no mean differences were found between any of the three measures social desirability and the age cohorts in the current study. Thus, participants being in their 20s, 30s, 40s, or 50s did not significantly impact mean social desirability ratings. However, there were significant mean differences between age cohorts and several of the other self-report constructs, including the CCQ, the PSRS, and the Teacher Experiences Scale. This is consistent with previous research, with study participants in their 40s and above having lower mean levels of depression (Hitchcott, Penna, & Fastame, 2020).

### *Age Differences in Correlations*

Within the patterns of correlations, there were some correlations that differed significantly based on the age of the respondents. The relationship between social desirability and age has not been consistently identified in the past literature. In addition, for the current study, age also served as a proxy for years of experience in the teaching field. Correlational analyses helped clarify strength of the associations between social desirability and the other self-report measures for each age cohort. As social desirability is meant to measure what an individual finds salient based on their own self-perceptions, it was important to investigate whether social desirability related similarly to other self-report variables for different generations. However, results should be interpreted with caution, as the population numbers for each age cohort were small. Table 8 in the appendix presents the patterns of correlations by age, with the overall study correlations bolded. The most significant findings related to age are summarized.

#### *i. 20s participants*

For participants in their 20s, there was a significant inverse correlation between Impression Management and Social Evaluation, not found in the overall sample. This fit in with the adaptive perspective, as it was possible that for participants in their twenties, managing impressions was more related to stress over social evaluation than for other study participants.

#### *ii. 30s participants*

For participants in their 30s, results were very similar to the overall sample, however, for the two adaptive perspectives (MC and IM) there were no significant correlations with coping competence.

#### *iii. 40s participants*

For participants in their 40s, the Marlowe-Crowne scale was significantly inversely correlated with Social Evaluation, in contrast to the overall sample. Self-Deception results were also similar to the overall sample, however there were no significant correlations between Impression Management and any of the other self-report constructs.

*iv. 50s participants*

For participants in their 50s, the Marlowe-Crowne and Impression Management scales were correlated only with Positive Affect, in the most significant deviation from the overall results, and the Self-Deception subscale was only correlated with Social Conflict.

Overall, age differences in correlations supported the adaptive perspective. Though population numbers were low, the magnitude of the correlations, particularly ones that were not seen at all in the overall sample, support the idea that social desirability does relate to the values and experiences of particular populations. However, the lack of significance in these results may be attributable to the small sample size in the age subgroups investigated.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study aimed to examine the basic conceptualization of social desirability, as measured by the three most commonly used instruments to measure it (short forms of the Marlowe-Crowne scale, and the Impression Management and Self-Deception subscales of the BIDR) in relation to self and narrative-based reports. The key question this research was concerned with was: does social desirability add irrelevant variance (making it a validity confound) or does social desirability give information on how an individual adapts (making it a valuable source of information). The context of the COVID-19 pandemic helped illuminate how socially desirable responding operated in an anonymous survey context in a time of distress and



also during a time when expressing more negative opinions may have been more socially acceptable. Traditionally, social desirability has been considered a bias that needed to be removed from self-reports, either as faking good or faking bad. However, more recent research has indicated that social desirability may provide additional insight into individuals' self-perceptions and values, and should not be dismissed from self-reports. In previous teacher research, it has been shown that, as opposed to self-reports, narratives are better expected to capture the professional and personal values of respondents (Louws et. al., 2017). Narratives offered a link between the conscious self-perceptions of the self-reports and salient social and personal memories of narratives. Social desirability, conceptualized as either a bias or adaptive, represents a sociocultural interpretation of one's environment that is captured in narratives.

In situations like the current study, where anonymity reduced the incentive to falsify responses in a positive manner, further insights may be gained about social desirability. Inclusion of narratives in addition to self-reports, enabled a broader exploration of social desirability in a context with less incentive to fake responses on self-report. Narratives are less subject to faking than self-report, hence relations with social desirability may be examined to clarify this construct.

If social desirability contributed needless variance, it would be expected that social desirability, assuming all measures are valid, would exert a biasing impact on all self-report constructs. Such bias would be evident in consistent patterns of significant negative correlations with negative constructs (e.g., stress reactivity, negative affect) and positive correlations with positive constructs (e.g., coping competence and positive affect). Whereas the magnitude of correlations would be expected to differ, the direction and significance of these correlations

would be expected to be relatively consistent across all three measures of social desirability. This expectation comes from both past social desirability research utilizing all three scales, as well as the original validation of the BIDR. Studies utilizing all three social desirability measures have found that, in self-reports, “little changes as a function of different social desirability scales even when they tap into different aspects of the construct” (Furham, Petrides, & Spencer-Bowdage, 2002, p. 128). In the original validation of the BIDR, several questions for the Impression Management subscale were taken directly from the Marlowe-Crowne scale (see appendix for scale items) (Paulhus, 1984). In addition, further studies utilizing both scales have found that the Marlowe-Crowne (a one-factor measure of social desirability) tends to capture many of the same socially desirable ideals as the Impression Management subscale ( $r = .53, p < .001$ ), but not as many with the Self-Deception subscale ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ) (Hart et. al, 2015). Even though the scales purport to measure different social desirability motivations, the correlational outcomes with self-report variables tend to be quite similar (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). However, when responses are anonymous, there is no external motivation to provide a desirable response, the role of MC and IM may be called into question. For this reason, it is assumed that the results of the current study give actual insight into the values and behavior of respondents.

Social desirability, insofar as it influences responses, would not be considered a bias when the meaning of a response is unknown. In the current study, this was observed via the coded narratives. Narratives could be self-edited, which would be subject to bias, however the underlying phenomena being investigated (narrative-based locus of control and narrative-based coping) would not be subject to respondent awareness. Hence, relations between social desirability and coded narratives describing behavior were taken as inconsistent with the bias perspective.

Other factors such as age were also explored, consistent with previous research where correlations between social desirability and other self-report constructs such as affect and personality factors differed in magnitude based on age (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011), field of study, or advanced degree (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). This pattern would be expected under the more active conceptualizations of social desirability, MC and IM, because one's job or field of study presumably impacts what one considered desirable.

Results from the current study indicated that social desirability can be a valuable source of information about what individuals value at a particular point in time. In the case of social desirability as a bias, the characteristics of the respondent considered relevant were often shaped by the theoretical basis behind the definition being used. As a bias, high social desirability was motivated by either an unconscious or conscious desire to deceive others either for approval, or to maintain a positive emotional state through dishonest self-reports (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Paulhus, 1984). However, this perspective did not leave open the possibility that what was considered desirable may vary by context (e.g., time, place, profession, personal events). As, “questionnaires are administered under all sorts of conditions, and the motivations of their respondents may vary in consequence” (Ellis, 1946, p. 386). Thus, even if social desirability operates somewhat unconsciously, there is still some kind of internal motivation to present a certain way in certain contexts as opposed to others. In the current study, narrative-based reports acted as a bridge between social desirability, self-reports, and descriptions of actual behavior. The current study demonstrated that the motivations of respondents varied, depending on their professional and personal context (context being factors such as age/years of experience teaching, COVID regulations in their area, support from administrators). Though self-reports and narrative-reports may have tapped into different contextual factors, the true distinction between

them in this study was rooted in measurement. Self-reports were subject to conscious awareness, and therefore could be biased, while narrative-based reports were less subject to awareness because what they were measuring was not explicitly stated.

This study expanded the understanding of social desirability in several ways. Firstly, it lent credence to the idea of social desirability as adaptive, by showing different constellations of relationship patterns via correlations with self-reported distress and coping, and secondly by showing relations with narrative-based codes related to behavior. Variables in this study ranged from general self-report ratings like the PANAS (where respondents answered one-word feeling questions in the moment), to open-ended questions on the (at the time) current global situation (What stands out as significant about your experience with COVID?). Having a range of self-report and narrative-report measures was critical to parse apart several dimensions of this research including: a. do different conceptualizations/measures of social desirability yield different patterns of responses within self and narrative-based reports, and b. do higher self-ratings of social desirability on any of these measures relate to narrative-based responses, and the salient variables derived from these open-ended narratives. The intent behind using these measures was to examine patterns of self-report variables related to social desirability that could have implications for how individuals frame and make sense of their experiences in informal narrative responses.

The use of multiple social desirability scales was important to support these analyses, particularly given that one, the MC, was scored dichotomously, while the others SD and IM were scored continuously. On the MC, items are phrased in an all-or-nothing manner (e.g., “I have NEVER deliberately said something that hurt someone’s feelings”). The analogous item on the impression management subscale of the BIDR are phrased more openly (e.g., “I have said

something bad about a friend behind their back”), allowing for participants to endorse items to the degree they felt they resonated, as opposed to having to endorse either one versus the other. As self-reports would be more subject to socially desirable responses, narratives offered another framing of the individual’s actual actions or beliefs during the COVID-19 pandemic, without having a formal second informant.

#### *Overall Correlational Analyses- Bias versus Adaptive Perspective*

This overreporting would manifest in all positive constructs, as they are considered desirable. The overall pattern supported the adaptive perspective for both measures. As a bias, it would be expected that those high on social desirability would universally overreport positive behavior and underreport negative behaviors (Hart, 2015). This has been seen in the employment literature, where participants have endorsed being more conscientious, agreeable, and extraverted when applying to jobs, than participants who have already been hired, or participants who have been instructed to answer honestly (Konstabel, Aavik, & Allik, 2006). However, the magnitude of this positive self-reporting has differed based on context, such as the demographic characteristics of those completing self-reports. In a study of self-reported cultural competence, participants high on social desirability generally rated themselves more highly on measures of cultural competence (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). However, the magnitude of these correlations differed by the race of the respondent, with Black participants with high social desirability rating themselves as more culturally competent than their white counterparts, and by college major, with psychology majors rating themselves more culturally competent than their undergrad counterparts (see review, Larson & Bradshaw, 2017). Thus, in the employment literature there is evidence that context variables such as race and college major impact the self-ratings of those with higher social desirability.

The current study's context differed from these previous works in several ways. This study targeted specifically kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in the United States. In addition, respondents varied in age, and subsequently, years of experience in the field. As a bias, it would be expected that these respondents would reject the negative constructs in this study (negative affect, all domains of perceived stress reactivity) because those constructs were inconducive to being an effective teacher, which was not observed in the current study. For example, negative affect reflects an emotional state of sadness and lethargy, and relates to anxiety, depression, and overall psychological dysfunction (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Thus, under the bias perspective it would be expected that those high on social desirability would underreport negative affect, as it would not be conducive to general functioning for anyone, let alone teachers. However, in the current study negative affect was significantly inversely correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne (consistent with previous research), and self-deception, but not with impression management. On the opposite end, positive affect, which has been associated with extraversion, enthusiasm, and alertness, was not significantly correlated with any of the social desirability measures used in this study (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). In previous work, characteristics like extraversion have not been found adaptive in teachers, regardless of its desirability Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). The correlational results supported the adaptive perspective of social desirability, because associations varied depending on what participants found applicable to their own circumstances, as opposed to what was generally desirable.

#### *Correlations with the Marlowe-Crowne Scale*

It was hypothesized that for social desirability to constitute an adaptive motivation, participants would rate themselves highly on behaviors they deemed important to their sense-of-

self as teachers, and lower on behaviors that they don't believe they exhibit, even if those behaviors are considered desirable. This hypothesis served in contrast to the original bias conceptualization of the Marlowe-Crowne scale, where those high on social desirability would be so dependent on the approval of others that they would need to conform to societal expectations at the expense of their own independence (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). A more adaptive perspective posited that social desirability was more of a personality trait, revealing real personal self-appraisals of the respondents (Crowne, 1991). It was hypothesized that this more adaptive perspective would manifest in a consistent pattern of negative correlations with Negative Affect, Perceived Stress Reactivity, and the Teacher Experiences Scale. It was specifically noted that any correlation with negative affect would have a smaller magnitude than the correlation with Perceived Stress Reactivity, because perceived stress reactivity is more of a situational variable, as opposed to a long-standing personality trait (Schlotz et. al. 2011). COVID served as an overall situational variable, within which different patterns of correlations were expected, depending on the contextual factors participants were bringing into the study (e.g., their own experiences during COVID, as seen in the narratives, their age or years of experiences in the field). For social desirability to be considered more adaptive, it was expected that it would differ more at the situational variable level (e.g., PSRS) than at the personality variable level (e.g., affect). This pattern of correlations was supported in these results. Consistent with the literature reviewed, higher levels of social desirability on the Marlowe-Crowne scale were inversely correlated with negative affect (Brajša-Žganec, Ivanović, & Lipovčan, 2011). Low negative affect has been associated with calmness and peace, whereas high negative affect has been associated with self-report stress and lack of coping skills (Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011; Watson, Clark, & Tellegan, 1988). Also consistent with Hypothesis 1, there was no

significant correlation with Positive Affect. Past research has indicated that while positive affect may be desirable, it is not needed to be an effective teacher, above and beyond other factors such as emotion regulation and self-efficacy, and has historically not been related to social desirability in other studies (Brajša-Žganec, Ivanović, & Lipovčan, 2011; Khalilzadeh & Khodi, 2018; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker, 2011). Specifically, those with higher positive affect feel engaged, happy, and as though they are able to maximally concentrate and sustain energy (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). These results are consistent with the idea of social desirability as an adaptive construct, as, according to the literature reviewed, lower negative affect is more associated with overall well-being and coping skills than higher positive affect. Similarly, the Teacher Experiences Scale, which describes negative emotional and physical outcomes, was significantly inversely correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne short-form, and lower ratings on the CCQ (which described higher levels of coping), were related to higher levels of social desirability. Overall, this pattern of correlations fit the pattern associated with an adaptive motivation described in Hypothesis 1.

Within the PSRS, the two subscales that were most strongly associated (inversely) with the short-form Marlowe-Crowne scale appear consistent with the adaptive perspective investigated by this author's previous study with student teachers: Work Overload and Social Conflict (Travis, 2020). It appeared that in the current sample, social conflict and work overload were the most salient aspects of the PSRS, consistent with the context of COVID at the time. Work overload has been defined as "feeling nervous, agitated, irritated in response to high workload" (Schlotz et. al, 2011, p. 81). Anecdotally, this was consistent with the narratives in the current study, where teachers referenced the higher workload throughout (e.g., "I spend 60-70 hours per week planning. I have considered leaving the profession because of all the negativity



and stress”; “the workload is triple than when we’re in the building”; and “no thought has been put into teacher workload. I spend twice as much time doing simple tasks as before because everything must also be done virtually”). Social conflict has been defined as “feeling affected, annoyed, upset in response to social conflict, criticism, rejection” (Schlotz et. al., 2011, p. 81). As previously referenced, the current study was conducted when discussions were occurring about whether or not teachers should return to school buildings in early 2021. This context was frequently brought up in the anecdotal narratives in this story as a large source of external stress for the teachers surveyed. (e.g., “In the spring parents thought teachers were great. We had a ton of support. Now we are back to how parents used to think of us, we are not so hot, everything is our fault”; “I resent that teachers are viewed as being lazy because we don’t want to go into the building”; “local school board/politics skewed datum and does not have regard for teachers. Basically said we weren’t really working- I have never worked as long or as hard”). The other PSRS subscales were all negatively correlated with the short-form Marlowe-Crowne as well, however none of them were close to significance. These results supported the adaptive perspective, because individuals high on MC social desirability did not solely endorse what was desirable, they endorsed items that were embedded in the narratives as well.

#### *Marlowe-Crowne and Narratives*

In research on social desirability in employment, it was found that those who intentionally distort their responses on self-reports may be more interpersonally competent in workplace interactions (actual behaviors), consistent with the adaptive perspective of the current study (Li & Bagger, 2006). As a bias, social desirability would be expected to suppress or obscure the relationship between self-report variables and actual performance (Li & Bagger, 2006). Previous study results have indicated that the true answer may lie somewhere between

these two ideas. Social desirability has shown a weak relationship with actual performance, regardless of its correlations to self-reports (Li & Bagger, 2006). In the current study, the Marlowe-Crowne was not related to narrative-based locus of control or coping, indicating that it did not serve as a biasing factor or as an active component of the behaviors described in narratives. Although these results were not consistent with the hypothesized adaptive view of the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability conceptualization, they also did not support the bias perspective, indicating that the relationship between MC social desirability and narrative-based reports of behavior remains unclear and open for further research.

### *Impression Management and Correlations*

The construct of impression management emphasizes a desire to be perceived positively by others and taking active steps to cultivate that perception. For impression management to constitute an adaptive motivation, it was expected that patterns of correlations would reflect what teachers found salient to their own identities as teachers, as opposed to what might be perceived as positive more generally. In the current study, patterns of correlations were similar to those found with the short-form Marlowe-Crowne results, with a couple of notable differences. Neither positive nor negative affect were significantly correlated with impression management, in contrast to the previous literature reviewed. For those interested in managing others' impressions of them under the adaptive perspective, affect may not be a relevant factor, because it is considered a relatively stable personality trait, as opposed to actual situational responding (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Additionally, the overall PSRS was not significantly inversely correlated with impression management, despite being undesirable. However, within the PSRS, Social Conflict was significantly inversely correlated with impression management, indicating that those high on impression management endorsed lower reactivity to social

criticism, but not with the other PSRS constructs. As evidenced by the narratives, at the time this study was conducted, social conflict was a very public source of stress for teachers. In managing impressions, what appeared to be most salient for this sample was presenting as less reactive to social conflict, above and beyond presenting as lower on other dimensions of situational stress, which is highly reflective of the context (timing) of the study. Overall, this pattern of correlations with self-report measures also fit the pattern associated with an adaptive motivation described in Hypothesis 1.

### *Impression Management and Narratives*

On a conscious level, impression management could be adaptive if it drives self-report in ways that are in accord with adaptive self-presentation. For narratives, any relations observed with social desirability would be due to the information that social desirability provided about the respondent. Of the three social desirability measures used in this study, only impression management was significantly related to narrative-based locus of control. Impression management is, more than any other conceptualization, an active motivation to influence the perceptions of others. Past research has conceptualized impression management as a desire for self-control, reflecting a sensitivity to changes in social conditions (Uziel, 2010). This is reflective of what was seen in the current study. With respect to Hypothesis 2, those with higher impression management, the more active of the social desirability conceptualizations, were more likely to have external locus of control. It is possible that, considering the significant external factors related to COVID and teaching environments in January 2021, that the desire to manage impressions was at odds with taking action to alter the teaching environment. A predisposition for internal locus of control comes out of the idea that an individual's behavior causes change, however it is dependent on past reinforcement of behavioral initiatives, meaning that internality

is socially constructed (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). This is consistent with LoC research from COVID, where the actions of those in power politically influenced citizens' perceptions of locus of control, particularly when citizens had representatives (e.g., teachers unions) working to address their interests (Krampe et. al. 2021). It is important to note that 80% of the narratives were coded as external locus of control. The prompt for the current study was open-ended and perhaps did not probe for internality from the respondents of the current study. Although the context and nature of the probe may have been an influential factor in the proportion of narratives capturing internal versus external locus of control, impression management seemed to function as a lens for describing one's own behavior in the circumstance of COVID. Those with higher impression management appeared to rely more on external sources of control. Most of the narratives, as will be further discussed, expressed some level of distress, either at a general Global level, or a Specific level due to one's own circumstances. Therefore, for the participants who chose to complete narratives, what was salient to them about their experiences with COVID was overwhelmingly negative and distressing. It may be that this situational distress made it difficult for teachers who engaged in this survey (in early 2021) to maintaining internal locus of control, as measured in these narratives. The relationship between impression management and narrative-based locus of control argues against the bias perspective, as there would not be a relationship at all under the bias perspective. However, it remains unclear whether or not impression management had an adaptive impact on narrative-based locus of control.

### *Self-Deception and Correlations*

As measured by the current instrument, the understanding of self-deception as maladaptive may need to be reconsidered, given the results of the current study. The initial correlations were consistent with the expectations of the bias perspective, however, when the

relationship with narratives is considered there may be reasons to interpret patterns differently. Those high on self-deception also endorsed lower negative affect, and overall lower stress reactivity across dimensions. While the idea of self-deception has been considered as something negative, as the individual would be disconnected from reality, some research has proposed that these illusions can be positive (Cervellione, Lee, & Bonanno, 2009). In this more adaptive view of self-deception, though it conceptualized as unconscious, self-deception still represents a skewed but honest perspective of oneself (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). Moderate self-deception may represent an optimal level for positive mental health outcomes (Cervellione, Lee, & Bonanno, 2009). In fact, some degree of self-deception has been noted as not only an advantage for overall well-being, but also for quick interpersonal adaptation in the short-term (Uziel & Cohen, 2020). Past research has indicated that self-deception is better able to detect social desirability as a biasing factor than impression management (Kam, 2013), and that self-deception tends to have stronger correlational relationships with self-rated personality dimensions than impression management (Huang, 2012). This idea is consistent with the results of the current study, where self-deception had stronger correlations overall, but did not appear to discriminate between constructs important to the specific values or experiences of the respondents. While the relationship between self-deception and self-reported coping competence could be chalked up as deception, this does not explain the narrative-results of the current study.

### *Self-Deception and Narratives*

This study suggested that self-deception may manifest adaptively in the current sample by promoting action-oriented coping, as seen in narratives. Self-deception was the only one of the three social desirability measures to be positively associated with narrative-based coping.

Interestingly, in the current study, there was small but significant positive correlation between coping rated from narratives and reported on the Coping Competence Questionnaire.

Previous factor analysis research has found that self-deception, instead of loading onto a psychological defensiveness factor, loaded onto factors of self-efficacy and active coping (Gravdal & Sandal, 2005). The correlation of impression management with narrative coping found in this study is not attributable to bias. Some degree of self-deception may be adaptive in certain contexts.

#### *Exploring Relations between narrative-based Locus of control and self-reports*

Narratives were coded dichotomously as having either external or internal LoC, with the idea that internal LoC was more adaptive. This is consistent with past research that has indicated that internal LoC is associated with both higher levels of job satisfaction and active behavioral change to accommodate new situations (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). External LoC has also been more highly associated with avoidance, while internal LoC has been associated with help-seeking, which would be consistent with the view of an adaptive motivation in the current study.

Narratives in the current study were overwhelmingly negative, reflecting a time of turmoil where teachers did lack a lot of control of their circumstances. For that reason, comparing those with internal and external narrative-based locus of control and those higher or lower on social desirability was important. Narrative-based coping in this study was significantly related to overall coping competence on the CCQ, suggesting that coding along the continuum was consistent with an established quantitative method of coping.

#### *Exploratory Age-Based Differences*

As social desirability was expected to vary by personal context, age-based differences were important to explore, as in the current sample age also served as a proxy for years of

experience in the teaching field. Age has been explored in previous studies, however there have not been consistent conclusions drawn. In addition, previous social desirability validation studies have focused on undergraduate students, while the bulk of the current sample were in their mid-twenties through thirties (mean age= 36) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964; Paulhus, 1980; Reynolds, 1982). In the current study, for participants in their twenties (the same age as the sample that all three social desirability scales were validated with in previous research) there were no significant relations between the Marlowe-Crowne scale and any of the self-report dimensions. However, participants in their 20s endorsed different dimensions of perceived stress reactivity than participants in their 30s or 40s, indicating that, tentatively, teachers endorsed different self-reported stresses depending on their age cohort. Overall, these differences by age indicate that teachers at different stages in their lives and careers, are distinct in what they find desirable or salient in their professional self-presentation.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations in this research. One limitation is that there may have been an element of self-selective bias in teachers who participated in the study. This means that the results are not generalizable to all teachers in the United States. Although teachers across the U.S. responded, this was not a representative sample. The overall study sample was small, constraining the exploration of age cohort differences and coded narratives. For example, uneven distribution of narrative codes (e.g., 20% internal and 80% external locus of control) limited the number of participants receiving certain codes. The MC's internal consistency was low, impeding the correlational and narrative relationships observed. In addition, there was no outside information on actual functioning, limiting some of the conclusions of this research.

Finally, research on social desirability and narratives has been limited thus far, therefore the narrative-based hypotheses are exploratory.

### **Conclusions and Future Directions**

Ultimately, results of the current study supported the idea of social desirability as more than just a bias in self-reports, indeed it should be reconceptualized as an important source of information on values that influences how individuals think about their experiences and how they describe their behavior. As a bias, social desirability, in any of the three iterations investigated here, would exert a similar effect across self-report constructs, and these results would contrast with the coded narratives. This pattern was not observed in the current study. Instead, differing patterns of relationships with self-report measures of distress, coping, and affect were found with the different social desirability measures used. This is important given the anonymous nature of the study. Narratives offered additional insight into the lived experiences of teachers in the current study. These narratives reflected a great deal of distress, but also notable examples of active coping, and the maintenance of some semblance of internal locus of control despite the circumstances. Narrative-based internal locus of control was adaptive for participants in the current study, consistent with past research.

Impression Management and Marlowe-Crowne were not significantly associated with narrative-based coping, whereas self-deception was significantly associated with narrative-based coping. This pattern makes sense given the results and scope of the current study. In the adaptive perspective, both the MC and IM conceptualizations are meant to be more active constructions of social desirability, where individuals are making choices in what they find desirable, and presenting themselves according to their perspective. Self-deception, in contrast, is meant to be unconscious, where individuals genuinely believe themselves to be as they present to others, as



opposed to trying to actively construct that presentation. This sheds light on the distinction between impression management and self-deception, showing that impression management may be an important active motivator and a lens through which experience is filtered, while self-deception may be an unconscious motivator. As seen in the overall narrative results, very few participants wrote narratives where they were actively adapting to their circumstances. Therefore, while the narrative-based coping continuum may have shown consistency with self-rated coping, the higher end of the continuum did not appear to capture the same behaviors measured by the other self-ratings. Narrative-based locus of control did appear to capture different self-rated behaviors, depending on orientation. However, further research is needed to parse apart narrative-based locus of control and social desirability, with more diversity in locus of control codes.

Narratives revealed that social desirability does not act uniformly across all constructs. Relations were found within these narratives that were attributable to unconscious processes like self-deception, as opposed to the more active impression management and MC manifestations of social desirability. If some degree of social desirability is unconscious, then narratives, and the way individuals talk or think about their experiences will be influenced by social desirability naturally. Thus, whether or not social desirability is a conscious or unconscious process, it can still give researchers and clinicians valuable information on clients' perceptions of their own functioning, as well as their actual expression of their experiences. This is reflected in past research on social desirability and narrative self-report, where those with moderate scores on social desirability measures (both impression management and self-deception) wrote more coherent narratives than those who were either very high or very low on social desirability measures (Peace & Bouvier, 2008). The rationale behind this was that those with high social

desirability would include too many details, making their narratives less coherent (and less likely to be truthful), and that those low on social desirability would include too few details, making their narratives less coherent due to a lack of information (Peace & Bouvier, 2008). Thus, there is an opportunity for a happier medium, where self-attributed personality characteristics and desirable responses could actually relate to how one describes their own experiences in implicit narratives.

Further studies of all three measures of social desirability and age would help illuminate how much of a factor age plays in what is considered desirable. Larger-scale studies incorporating all three measures of social desirability alongside self-report, other-reports of actual functioning, and demographic components like age and profession would help to further clarify how each of these constructs influences self and other-reports of behavior.

## APPENDIX

### Coding Categories:

#### External and Internal Locus of Control

-What is the mechanism of change, is it outside of the individual's control, or are they able to do something about the situation?

External: Outside of the person's control, something has happened to them, outside source of responsibility

Internal: Inside the person's control, they are exerting influence over the situation, self is source of responsibility

#### Factual, global distress, specific distress, getting by, coping

Global Distress: Describing overall stressors and pressures i.e. politics, district or school policies, that are out of the control of the educator, general concerns

-Example: Significant stress on students, specifically with special needs. Difficulty learning remote and difficulty transitioning back to in person instruction. Constant states of fear and anxiety. **Code: 1**

Coping: active problem-solving, goal-directed solutions to problems

-Example: I'm lucky to live in a state that did relatively well. My school is also recently built, so our HVAC system has been a lifesaver (probably literally) for keeping the school ventilated. Our district is fairly wealthy so going online has been aided by school-provided devices and WiFi routers. We have had to adapt to being outdoors much more, which I hope stays in the future - the kids love it and it makes a big difference on their attitudes. We are also all catching up on technology very quickly, although having students access it while at home is still difficult. Some benefits have arisen (no arguing about shared supplies, since nothing is shared) but I don't know how that will effect social skills in the future. We are also actively teaching more social emotional skills in an attempt to address trauma from living through a pandemic. **Code: 3**

*Codes in between will correspond with:*

Specific Distress: Describing stresses and pressures that are specific to the educator's experiences. Specific area of pandemic changes is causing stress.

-Example: My district pushed for us to go back without full safety plans in place. We are also doing in person and remote learning at the same time. It has been extremely stressful. **Code: 2**

Getting By: Positive takeaway without specific coping strategies

-Example: I am lucky to teach at a school that (a) was able to transition to remote learning in a way that remained meaningful for teachers and students and (b) was able to return to in-person learning for the 2020-21 school year. As many of my colleagues have noted, there has been notable increase in the gratitude that teachers and students feel and express for the time we actually get to spend together. **Code: 0**

To further explore why these social desirability scales differed so significantly in their associations with the self-report items in this study, Table 6 will compare the items, with overlapping or similar items between the three scales highlighted.

Table 6

*Marlowe-Crowne, BIDR Short-Form Questions and Factors*

Marlowe-Crowne Short-Form Item	Self-Deception Short-Form Item	Impression Management Short-Form Item
1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged	I have not always been honest with myself	I sometimes tell lies if I have to
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way	I always know why I like things	I never cover up my mistakes
3. On a few occasions I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability	It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought	There have been occasions where I have taken advantage of someone
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority, even though I knew they were right	I never regret my decisions	I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a great listener	I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough	I have said something bad about a friend behind their back
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone	I am a completely rational person	When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening
7. I am always willing to admit when I made a mistake	I am very confident of my judgments	I never take things that don't belong to me
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget		I don't gossip about other people's business

9. I am always courteous,  
even to people who are  
disagreeable
- 
10. I have never been irked  
when people expressed ideas  
very different from my own
- 
11. There have been times  
when I was quite jealous of  
the good fortune of others
- 
12. I am sometimes irritated  
by people who ask favors of  
me
- 
13. I have never deliberately  
said something that hurt  
someone's feelings
- 

As seen in Table 6, there was no overlap between the short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the self-deception subscale of the BIDR. There was some overlap between the short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne scale and the impression management subscale of the BIDR (half of the impression management items had an analogue on the short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne). One difference could be found in the phrasing of questions.

#### *Sub-Population Mean Differences and Correlational Differences*

Table 7: Sub-Population Mean differences Table

Construct	Overall Mean	20s Mean	30s Mean	40s Mean	50s Mean
Social Desirability					
MC:	7.039	7.278	7.282	7.278	6.461
IM:	37.411	35.896	38.029	38.000	36.917
SDE:	30.273	28.173	31.389	30.300	29.667
Perceived Stress Reactivity	23.469*	23.920*	23.026	24.529	24.000
SE:	4.490	5.520	4.128	4.650	3.769

SC:	5.654	5.640	5.692	5.579	5.846	
F:	3.941	3.720 <sup>+</sup>	4.000	4.300 <sup>+</sup>	3.846	
WO:	5.060	4.960	4.921	5.316	5.923	
P:	4.188	4.080	4.000	4.421	4.615	
Coping Competence	32.906	34.260	32.083	33.850 <sup>++</sup>	35.083 <sup>++</sup>	
Teacher Experiences	65.721	74.130	64.297	61.500	65.750	
Positive Affect	26.323	26.152	24.407	28.148 <sup>+</sup>	27.813 <sup>+</sup>	<sup>+</sup> indicates significant mean difference at .05 level, <sup>++</sup> indicates significant mean difference at .001 level, *.056 significance
Negative Affect	19.479	20.770	18.617	19.000	20.813	

For participants in their twenties, as compared to the rest of the sample, results approached significance (mean= 23.92, significance= .056) for mean differences on the overall PSRS (mean=23.52), indicating that participants in their 20s had higher mean ratings of stress than the rest of the sample. For participants under 40, there was a significant mean difference (mean= 4.14, significance= .033) on scores for the Failure subscale of the PSRS (mean= 3.89), with participants under 40 being having lower mean ratings of reactivity to Failure than participants 40 and over. For people in their 40s, there were significant mean differences on the Teaching Experiences scale (mean: 61.50, significance= .049), with participants in their 40s having lower mean negative experiences as compared to participants in their 50s (mean= 65.75). Differences were also observed on the CCQ (mean: 33.85, significance <.001) compared to participants in their 50s, with participants in their 40s having lower mean coping competence than participants in their 50s (mean= 35.08), indicating better coping for those in their 40s

Table 8: Correlations by Age

Construct	MC	20s	30s	40s	50s	IM	20s	30s	40s	50s	SD	20s	30s	40s	50s
Positive Affect (+)	<b>.187</b>	.019	.043	.180	.795**	<b>.179</b>	.160	-.079	.228	.722**	<b>.042</b>	.093	.149	-.228	.109
Negative Affect (-)	<b>-.209 *</b>	.016	-.252	-.406	-.305	<b>-.190</b>	-.055	-.211	-.005	-.487	<b>-.211*</b>	-.011	-.388*	-.187	-.477
Coping Competence (+)	<b>.287**</b>	.263	.304	.414	.254	<b>.230*</b>	.237	.231	.029	.353	<b>.525**</b>	.484*	.626**	.520	.310
PSRS Total (-)	<b>-.287**</b>	-.134	-.346	-.766**	-.177	<b>-.169</b>	-.147	-.211	-.156	-.154	<b>-.671**</b>	-.751**	-.702**	-.766**	-.409
Prolonged (PSRS) (-)	<b>-.110</b>	-.129	-.118	-.216	-.068	<b>.130</b>	.214	.063	.102	.160	<b>-.520**</b>	-.669**	-.585**	-.277	-.365
Work Overload (PSRS) (-)	<b>-.265**</b>	-.127	-.324	-.103	-.472	<b>-.150</b>	.127	-.278	.024	-.411	<b>-.535**</b>	-.500*	-.582**	-.675**	-.231
Social Conflict (PSRS) (-)	<b>-.316**</b>	-.160	-.327*	-.395	-.334	<b>-.372**</b>	-.402	-.400*	-.224	-.456	<b>-.474**</b>	-.461*	-.465**	-.533*	-.577*
Social Evaluation (PSRS) (-)	<b>-.037</b>	-.221	-.136	-.652**	.178	<b>-.094</b>	-.415*	.037	-.183	.029	<b>-.483**</b>	-.313	-.518**	-.699**	-.233
Failure (PSRS) (-)	<b>-.171</b>	.371	-.106	-.480	-.072	<b>-.056</b>	.012	-.109	-.273	.117	<b>-.400**</b>	-.263	-.598**	-.245	-.178
Teacher Experiences (-)	<b>-.330**</b>	-.306	-.381*	-.353	-.308	<b>-.240*</b>	-.182	-.275	-.101	-.178	<b>-.287**</b>	-.048	-.488	-.001	-.299

## 20s Participants

For participants in their twenties (n=26), there were no significant correlations between any of the self-report measures used, and the Marlowe-Crowne scale, potentially indicating that the Marlowe-Crowne scale was not a strong fit for twenty-something participants in the current study. Consistent with the overall correlation results, self-deception (n=23) correlated inversely with the overall PSRS ( $r = -.751^{**}$ ), Social Conflict (PSRS) ( $r = -.461^{*}$ ), Work Overload (PSRS) ( $r = -.500^{**}$ ), and Prolonged Stress (PSRS) ( $r = -.669^{**}$ ). Self-deception also correlated with the CCQ ( $r = .484^{*}$ ). In contrast with the overall correlation for the sample, self-deception did not correlate significantly with Failure ( $r = -.263$ ) and Social Evaluation ( $r = -.313$ ) components of the PSRS, with either dimension of affect (PA  $r = .093$ , NA  $r = -.011$ ), or with the teacher experiences scale ( $r = -.048$ ). Looking at Impression Management (n=23), there was one significant correlation for participants in their twenties, which was not reflected in the overall

sample. Whereas in the overall sample, the Social Evaluation dimension of the PSRS was not correlated with Impression Management ( $r=-.094$ ), within participants in their twenties, Social Evaluation was the only variable significantly correlated with Impression Management ( $r=-.415^*$ ). In sum, for participants in their 20s, in contrast to the overall patterns, there were no significant correlations between the MC and other self-report constructs; self-deception was not significantly correlated with, Failure, Social Evaluation, Teacher Experiences, or Affect. Finally, there was a significant inverse correlation between Impression Management and Social Evaluation, not found in the overall sample. This fits in with the adaptive perspective, as in this sample, participants in their twenties may have been more concerned with social evaluation than participants in other age groups. It is possible that for participants in their twenties, managing impressions is more related to stress over social evaluation than for other study participants.

**30s Participants.** For participants in their thirties, the Marlowe-Crowne Scale ( $n=39$ ) was significantly correlated with the Teacher Experiences Scale ( $r=-.381^*$ ), the overall PSRS ( $r=-.346^*$ ), and the Social Conflict subscale of the PSRS ( $r=-.327^*$ ). The Self-Deception subscale of the BIDR was significantly inversely correlated with all of the same dimensions as the overall sample ( $n=36$ ), consistent with the bias perspective. The Impression Management subscale of the BIDR ( $n=35$ ) was significantly inversely correlated with only the Social Conflict subscale of the PSRS ( $-.400^*$ ). In sum, for participants in their 30s, results were very similar to the overall sample, however, for the two adaptive perspectives (MC and IM) there were no significant correlations with coping competence. Implications for this will be presented in the Discussion.

**40s Participants.** For participants in their 40s, the only significant correlation between the Marlowe-Crowne scale ( $n=18$ ) and the other self-report measures was with the Social



Evaluation scale of the PSRS ( $r = -.652^{**}$ ), in contrast to the overall pattern in the study where Social Evaluation was not significantly correlated with the MC ( $r = -.171$ ). Consistent with the overall correlation results, there were significant inverse correlations between self-deception ( $n = 20$ ) and, the overall PSRS ( $r = -.766^{**}$ ), Social Conflict (PSRS) ( $r = -.533^*$ ), Work Overload (PSRS) ( $r = -.676^{**}$ ), and Social Evaluation (PSRS) ( $r = -.699^{**}$ ), and a positive correlation with the CCQ ( $r = .520^*$ ). As seen in Table 8 in the appendix, some constructs that were significantly correlated with MC in the overall sample did not show significant correlations for participants in their 40s. In contrast to the overall sample, there were no significant correlations between MC and Failure, Social Evaluation, either dimension of affect, or the Teacher Experiences scale. There were no significant correlations between impression management ( $n = 20$ ) and any of the other self-report constructs. In sum, for participants in their 40s, the Marlowe-Crowne scale was significantly inversely correlated with Social Evaluation, Self-Deception results were similar to the overall sample, and there were no significant correlations between Impression Management and any of the other self-report constructs.

**50s Participants.** For participants in their 50s, results were notably different. Both the Marlowe-Crowne scale ( $n = 13$ ) and the impression management subscale of the BIDR ( $n = 12$ ) were only correlated with Positive Affect (MC  $r = .795^{**}$ , IM  $r = .722^{**}$ ). The self-deception subscale of the BIDR ( $n = 12$ ) was only correlated with the Social Conflict subscale of the PSRS ( $r = -.577^*$ ). In sum, for participants in their 50s, the Marlowe-Crowne and Impression Management scales were correlated only with Positive Affect, in the most significant deviation from the overall results, and the Self-Deception subscale was only correlated with Social Conflict.

### *Percent Endorsement: Marlowe Crowne*

To further examine the properties of the Marlowe-Crowne scale, the percent endorsement of desirable responses was investigated and compared to the original validation. As seen in Table 9, in this study, the items most often endorsed in the desirable direction were numbers: 4 (There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority, even though I knew they were right, keyed False), 7 (I am always willing to admit when I made a mistake, keyed True), 8 (I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget, keyed False), and 9 (I am always courteous even to those who are disagreeable, keyed True). Interestingly, the least endorsed desirable item was number 10 (I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own, keyed True). In the original validation, items 5, 7, and 9 were the most-frequently endorsed items (Reynolds, 1982); in this study items 7 and 9 were among the most frequently endorsed, with item 5 being endorsed frequently, but not as often as other items. The most desirable item endorsements (70% endorsement and above for the desirable response) were as follows: #4 (There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority, even though I knew they were right) was endorsed 72.6% in this study, #7 (I am always willing to admit when I made a mistake) was endorsed 79.2% , #8 (I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget) was endorsed 80.4%, #9 (I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable) was endorsed 75.7% in this study. Item 10 (I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own) was the least endorsed desirable response in this study (16.8%). Table 4 further clarifies the percent endorsement for MC items in this study as compared to original Reynolds (1982) validation.

Overall, in the current study, teachers reported that they do not rebel against those in authority or try to get even (72.6%), and that they do admit when they make mistakes, (79.2%)

and are always courteous, even to those who are disagreeable (75.7%). Teachers also reported, undesirably, that they are irked when people express ideas different than their own (only 16.8% chose the desirable option).

Table 9: Percent Endorsements for the Reynolds Marlowe-Crowne Scale

Marlowe-Crowne Short-Form Item	Percent Endorsement (for desirable response)	Direction	MC Item Endorsements (Reynolds, 1982)
1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged	30.2%	Not Desirable (F)	36.0%
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way	49.5%	Not Desirable (F)	30.0%
3. On a few occasions I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability	49.5%	Not Desirable (F)	44.0%
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority, even though I knew they were right	72.6%	Not Desirable (F)	42.0%
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a great listener	67.3%	Desirable (T)	59.0%
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone	67.9%	Not Desirable (F)	34.0%
7. I am always willing to admit	79.2%	Desirable (T)	61.0%

when I made a  
mistake

8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget	80.4%	Not Desirable (F)	47.0%
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable	75.7%	Desirable (T)	55.0%
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own	16.8%	Desirable (T)	41.0%
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others	33.0%	Not Desirable (F)	30.0%
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me	40.2%	Not Desirable (F)	50.0%
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings	44.3%	Desirable (T)	38.0%
	<i>n=106</i>		<i>n=608</i>

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