

# The Development and Validation of the Achievement Express Scale

*Brian Dreschler, M.A.*

The Achievement Express scale was developed to help provide employers with a quick measure of a candidate’s attitudes and opinions toward job related achievement. Specifically, the scale helps measure the extent to which a candidate demonstrates a desire to set and meet challenging objectives, finds better or more efficient ways to do things, and competes against a self defined standard of excellence.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACHIEVEMENT EXPRESS SCALE

The 10item Achievement Express scale was created using assessment items from a validated measure of Achievement Orientation. To simplify the Express scale for IVR administration, the response categories from the original scale were collapsed from six choices(Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to a four choice format(Strongly Agree, Slightly Agree, Slightly Disagree, Strongly Disagree) on the Express scale. Specifically, the slightly and moderately agree response options were collapsed to create the slightly agree option and the slightly and moderately disagree options were collapsed to create the slightly disagree option on the Express scale. The decision to collapse the response options in this way was made after analyses were completed comparing the distributions of the original scale and the Express scale. A sample of 8,616 retail applicants was used in the analysis which compared the skewness (degree of asymmetry in a distribution) and kurtosis (the relative peakedness or flatness of a distribution compared to the normal distribution) of the original and Express scale distributions. The results of the analysis, presented in Table 1, indicate that the two distributions are relatively similar.

**Table 1.A Comparison of Achievement Scale Distributions**

Scale	Skewness	Kurtosis
Achievement Orientation (original scale)	0.40	0.02
Achievement Express	0.20	0.16

A correlation was also computed between the original measure and the Express scale to determine the degree of similarity between the scales. The resulting coefficient ( $r = .97$ ) indicates the Express scale is comparable to the original measure.

## Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed in order to assess the internal consistency of the Achievement Orientation measures. Table 2 provides the alpha values for the original Achievement Orientation scale as well as the Express version of the scale. The Achievement Express scale produced an alpha reliability coefficient of .56, while the original scale reliability coefficient was .54. These results indicate that the internal consistency of the Achievement Express scale is similar to that of the original scale.

**Table 2. Reliability of Achievement Orientation Measures**

Scale	Sample N	# of Items	Alpha
Achievement Orientation (original scale)	8,616	10	.54
Achievement Express	8,616	10	.56

## Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Compliance

The potential for the Achievement Express scale to adversely impact protected groups (i.e., racial minorities and women) was assessed using the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC's) four fifths rule. This rule states that the proportion of protected group members that are successful in obtaining a given score must be at least 80% (4/5) of the proportion of non-protected group members obtaining the same score. The proportions of protected and non-protected groups reaching a percentile score of 15 on the Achievement Express scale were used as thresholds in the analysis. This scale standard is the recommended cut score set on the Achievement Express scale when used in the selection process. Results of the analysis, presented in Table 3, indicate that the Achievement Express scale does not adversely impact any protected group. That is, all of the passing rates of the protected groups are greater than 80% of the passing rates of the base groups.

**Table 3. Achievement Express EEOC Analysis**

Race	N	Percent Successful	EEOC Ratio	Compliance Met?
White	4,104	91%		
African American	2,179	87%	.96	YES
Hispanic	1,485	87%	.96	YES
Native American	98	82%	.90	YES
Asian	352	88%	.97	YES
Gender	N	Percent Successful	EEOC Ratio	Compliance Met?
Male	6,589	89%		
Female	1,992	87%	.97	YES

## VALIDATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT EXPRESS SCALE

The validity of the Achievement Express scale was documented by two concurrent, Criterion related validation studies. The first study was conducted using 256 non-exempt employees at a large retail organization. The second one was completed using a sample of 192 exempt employees.

### Study 1: Validation of the Achievement Express Scale using a Non-Exempt Employee Sample

Correlations were computed between nonexempt employee scores on the Achievement Express scale and managerial ratings of performance. Specifically, managers were asked to rate employee performance on the following dimensions related to achievement:

- Achievement Orientation (9-point rating scale ranging from Poor Performance to Outstanding performance)
- Motivated to overcome obstacles (9-point rating scale ranging from Never to Very Often)
- Sets and meets challenging work goals (9-point rating scale ranging from Never to Very Often)
- Overall quality of performance (9-point rating scale ranging from Poor to Outstanding)
- Overall quantity of performance (9-point rating scale ranging from Poor to Outstanding)
- Total job performance (9-point rating scale ranging from Poor to Outstanding)
- Performance rank relative to other employees (9-point rating scale ranging from Bottom 10% to Top 10%)
- Would you rehire the employee? (9-point rating scale ranging from Definitely Not to Definitely)

The results of the correlational analysis (Table 4) indicate that the Achievement Express scale was effective in predicting managerial ratings of performance in the non exempt sample. These results indicate that high scorers on the Achievement Express scale are more likely to be seen by their managers as goal oriented, motivated, and productive than low scorers on the scale.

**Table 4. Correlations between Achievement Express Scale Scores and Performance Ratings (Non Exempt Sample)**

Performance Ratings	N	r
Achievement Orientation	255	.17**
Motivation to Overcome Obstacles	249	.17**
Setting and Meeting Challenging Goals	247	.13*
Overall Performance Quality	256	.14*
Overall Performance Quantity	255	.14*
Total Performance	256	.16**
Performance Rank	256	.19**
Rehire Rating	256	.18**

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

## Study 2: Validation of the Achievement Express Scale using an Exempt Employee Sample

Correlations were computed between exempt employee scores on the Achievement Express scale and managerial ratings of performance. Managers were asked to rate employee performance on the same eight dimensions related to achievement as in the nonexempt study. Additionally, managers were asked to provide ratings regarding fundamental (or task) performance (six ratings) and contextual (or extra role) performance (six ratings). Importantly, these ratings were summed to provide overall ratings of fundamental and contextual performance for the analysis.

The results of the correlational analysis (Table 5) indicate that the Achievement Express scale was effective in predicting managerial ratings of performance in the exempt sample as well. These results indicate that high scorers on the Achievement Express scale are more likely to be seen by their managers as goal oriented, willing to take on extra responsibility, motivated to perform well, and productive than low scorers on the scale.

**Table 5. Correlations between Achievement Express Scale Scores and Performance Ratings (Exempt Sample)**

Performance Ratings	N	r
Achievement Orientation	192	.26**
Motivation to Overcome Obstacles	191	.20**
Setting and Meeting Challenging Goals	191	.26**
Fundamental Performance	190	.22**
Contextual Performance	173	.20**
Overall Performance Quality	192	.24**
Overall Performance Quantity	192	.24**
Total Performance	192	.25**
Performance Rank	192	.27**
Rehire Rating	192	.15*

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

## CONCLUSION

The results described above indicate that high scorers on the Achievement Express scale are more likely to demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that are associated with high performance on the job. The combination of significant validity coefficients, acceptable reliability, and freedom from adverse impact indicates that the Achievement Express scale can serve as a valuable screening tool in the selection process.