

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS AND THEIR USES IN WASHINGTON STATE
REGISTERED HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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by

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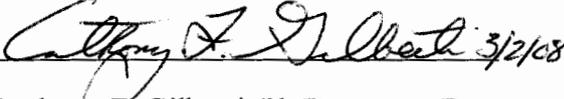
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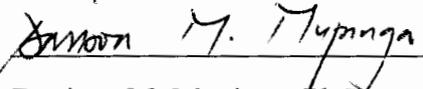
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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to identify the uses of personality assessments and their resulting consequences on employment at organizations registered with the Northwest Region of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This investigation reported on the application of psychometric testing within the organizational context. Specific to this study was personality or behavioral assessments administered when recruiting, evaluating, or retaining workers, the potential implications of behavioral/personality assessments on workers within the organization, and the organizational value perceived by testers utilizing these forms of personality assessments.

This investigation examined the current personality measuring practices of organizations by analyzing their responses to a survey questionnaire. The intent of the questionnaire was to determine if responses represented a trend toward a standardization of personality assessment use for purposes of employee development, recruitment, and retention.

Response data revealed that use of personality/behavioral tests isn't prevalent at State registered health and human service organizations. Data collected exhibited limited familiarity of personality/behavioral assessments and a trend against a standardization of personality assessment use in health and human service organizations.

Recommendations for future studies are specific to the fundamental hiring and screening processes administered at health and human service organizations, and the

instruments utilized for screening individuals desiring to work with vulnerable or disadvantaged populations. Additionally, a duplicate study applying equivalent methodology to a dissimilar demographic re: law firms, retail outlets, or technology companies has the capacity to render information vital for broad analysis of consistency, contextual application, and diversity of workplace personality/behavioral testing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.	1
Statement of Problem	2
Statement of Purpose.....	3
Statement of Need	3
Statement of Assumptions	5
Statement of Limitations	6
Statement of Terminology	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
History of Psychological Testing	8
Application of Personality Assessment	11
Personailty Assessment in Business and Industry	16
Types of Personailty Assessments	24
Objective-Ipsative Tests	27
Performance Tests	27
Reliability, Validity and Legality.....	28
Summary.....	36

3. METHODOLOGY.....	39
Statement of Procedures	40
4. RESEARCH ANALYSIS.	43
5. SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS.....	49
Restatement of the Problem.....	49
Discussion.....	50
Conclusions.....	52
Recommendations for Further Study	53
REFERENCES.....	55
APPENDIX	62

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A theory defines the non-observable constructs inferred from observable facts and events presumed to affect the phenomenon being studied, and it attempts to provide a general explanation for a particular phenomenon. A theory provides a description of the relationship between key variables for the purpose of explaining a current state or predicting occurrences in the future. Primarily concerned with explanation, a theory seeks to determine cause-effect relationships (Best & Kahn, 1998).

The notion of personality conjures many meanings. Some regard personality as a combination of characteristics such as interests, attitudes, abilities, and values that define and pattern behavior. Some view an individual's actual behavior in social situations as their personality (Walsh & Betz, 1995). McConnell (1980) defined personality as the characteristic way an individual behaves and thinks while adjusting to their environment. In addition to the overt or visible behavior patterns exhibited by human beings, core personality includes intrinsic elements such as traits, values, attitudes, intelligence, abilities, self-image, motives, genetic blueprint, and emotional reactivity.

Revealing the principles that describe how human beings behave is concealed in personality theory. Therefore, a complete theory of human personality must clarify

human sensations, perceptions, values, motivations, the ability to learn, the ability to change, and the tendency to relate to others (McConnell, 1980).

McConnell (1980) described the biological, the intra-psychic, and the social/behavioral characteristics as three aspects of human nature that should be considered equally in personality theory, but that rarely are considered. Generally, personality theorists have failed to give equal weight to all three viewpoints, instead, focusing on one or two aspects to place major theoretical emphasis or focusing on either the structure of an individual's personality or on the evolving dynamics that compose a person's present state. Though noble in their efforts, personality theorists have significantly compromised personality theory by failing to give equal weight to all three viewpoints: biological, intra-psychic, and social behavioral.

Dynamic theories of personality were developed essentially with personality theorist Sigmund Freud who began with a biological viewpoint toward human development but later recognized that personality was born from the interaction between biological and intra-psychic forces. He viewed human beings as psychological animals striving to become psychic individuals. Freud's colleague Carl Jung noted that humans were essentially spiritual individuals and emphasized the intra-psychic aspects of human personality. Alfred Adler, another colleague of Freud, viewed people as social creatures influenced by environmental factors and less by psychological forces (McConnell, 1980).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to identify the uses of personality assessments and their resulting consequences on employment within Washington State registered health

and human service organizations. This investigation reported on health and human service organizations utilizing psychometric testing within the organizational context.

Specific to this study was personality or behavioral assessments administered when recruiting, evaluating, or retaining workers, the potential implications of behavioral/personality assessments on workers within the organization, and the organizational value perceived by testers that utilize forms of personality assessments.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to provide HRD trainers and managers with an analysis of information regarding the various uses of personality and/or behavioral assessments administered in the workplace.

This investigation reported on the psychometric testing practices of twenty-one health and human service organizations currently registered with the Northwest Region of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington State. The researcher examined the current personality measuring practices of these organizations by analyzing the responses to questions on the researcher's survey questionnaire. Following a quantitative evaluation of the individual questionnaire's, the researcher reported on the current frequency of workplace personality testing, the context in which testing occurs, the potential influence personality and/or behavioral testing has on employment and retention in the organization, and the perceived validity and reliability of workplace personality assessment.

Statement of Need

Researchers of personality, psychology, and behavior have devoted time and attention to the design of scales to classify personality traits, theories to identify

personality characteristics, and techniques that systematically relate personality traits to behavior (Plummer, 2000). Zimmerman (2003) wrote that personality assessments, intelligent quotient tests, aptitude and ability tests all fall under the umbrella of psychometric tests that seek to measure particular psychological attributes, and testing professionals believe that psychometric testing can significantly improve the possibility of matching the right person with a particular position or corporate environment. Zimmerman (2003) wrote that employers who administer tests are primarily searching for candidates who can handle the demands of a particular job and can fit into the culture of the organization. Furthermore, tests seek to screen and assess applicants for leadership qualities and integrity. Dudley (2002) wrote that without one type of incentive to motivate employees and keep them satisfied with their jobs, human resource professionals are utilizing personality typing tests to help managers and business owners effectively communicate with their employees.

Lee (1991) stated that corporation's current zest for teams and teamwork is credited with fueling the demand for personality instruments. And that regardless of their form and format, the most popular of the instruments aim to offer insight into workers personalities that affect their on-the-job behavior. If used intelligently and for the purposes they were designed for, personality instruments are valuable tools for a trainer. Lee (1991) wrote: "The primary rationale for using personality assessments in training boils down to creating awareness--of personal style, of an abstract model, of strengths and weaknesses, and of differences among individuals" (p. 27).

Stanton and Matthews (1995) indicated that because of the innate challenge of uncovering true personality traits via one-time testing, a critical analysis of assessment

criteria and testing techniques was required in such activities as personnel selection, organizational development, and career advice.

This investigation allows HRD professionals the opportunity to review the researcher's data compiled and presented regarding the use of personality assessments within human service organizations. Questionnaire responses will reveal the commonality of personality/behavioral assessments, the methodological personality assessment practices implemented in the workplace, and who specifically administers assessments in the workplace. Prior to the quantitative measurement of all questionnaire responses, each questionnaire will be reviewed individually for accuracy, reliability of the reporting source, and completeness. Only completed questionnaires were utilized for data collection for the quantitative measurement study.

Statement of Assumptions

1. Human resource professionals at human service organizations utilize some form of personality assessment for recruitment, development, or retention purposes.
2. Test data was confidentially maintained and recommendations and conclusions made from results were only disseminated to the appropriate decision makers.
3. The use of psychometric batteries, specifically personality assessments will continue to increase in health and human service organizations.
4. Health and human service employers utilized personality assessments to relate to the duties of the job in question.
5. Personality tests were used in conjunction with other assessment methods to increase the likelihood of accurate worker evaluation.

6. Employer's obtain job applicants or employees written consent before administering any psychological assessment.
7. The questionnaire responses collected contain a high degree of reliability and validity.

Statement of Limitations

1. The number of health and human service organizations to be surveyed is limited to twenty-one.
2. The study was limited to one month in duration.
3. Using a random number generator, organizations were selected from throughout the Pacific Northwest Region.
4. The researcher acquired information regarding testing guidelines, and procedures from American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999).

Statement of Terminology

For the purposes of this study, the following terms have been defined:

Personality and behavioral assessment is the measurement of emotional adjustment, social relations, motivations, and interests.

Projective tests define a measurement tool whereby the subject is assumed to project aspects of him/herself unconsciously into his/her responses.

Psychometrics refers to the design and analysis of research and the measurement of human characteristics.

Objective tests are administered to groups and are often referred to as paper and pencil tests or self-report inventories.

Ipsative tests refer to a measurement whereby two equally socially desirable options are provided.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Psychological Testing

Aiken (1985) stated that our ability to assess people's different abilities, behaviors, and personalities has likely been recognized since the dawn of recorded history. Dating back to 2200 B.C.E., preceding even Plato and Aristotle's writings about individual differences, the ancient Chinese Han Dynasty created by Liu Bang, facilitated a civil service system to determine if government officials were fit to perform their duties at work.

The Renaissance period is viewed as a rebirth of individualism and a reawakening to learning. The spirit of individualism, displayed in expressions in art, science, and government flourished from the political and economic stimulation of capitalism and democracy. Psychological tests were developed from the increased interest in individualism in the 19th century. The psychological researchers became increasingly preoccupied with developing a system of personality classification that would apply an assessment tool to adequately measure individual differences (Aiken, 1985). Paul (2004) noted that humans have been searching for signs of order within the disarray and

diversity of our own natures for a long time. This need for coherence is generally faced with theories about personality, usually measured in the form of personality tests.

An increase in the use of personality assessment occurred in the 1900s in personnel selection practices as well as research designed to specifically evaluate psychological tests (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Psychologists developed tests that measured traits and aptitudes in the early 1900s and one such psychologist, Hugo Munsterberg designed a test that measured the necessary and desirable traits of employees. World War I was a major factor for development of all forms of psychological testing with the military's effort to measure the abilities and mental stability of their personnel (Black, 1994). The actual scientific study of individual differences was stimulated during the latter half of the nineteenth century with the writings of Charles Darwin on the origins of species and the emergence of scientific psychology (Aiken, 1985).

Projective testing evolved in the 1920s with the development of Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach's inkblot test that measured responses to vague stimulus of ink-blot formations. This test was developed for clinical environments, but it motivated practitioners of the time to think about psychological applications in the workplace (Kamen, 1997).

Performance or situational testing was a procedure developed in the 1930s and 1940s. A performance or situational testing procedure places subjects in an artificial or simulated situation designed to produce responses that reveal specific behavioral characteristics. This type of test was utilized and is still utilized by organizations to assess leadership ability. A performance test to assess social and emotional behavior was

developed during World War II by the Assessment Program of the Office of Strategic Services (Black, 1994; Kamen, 1997).

Personality assessments were a form of psychological measurement that employers frequently utilized to screen job applicants, make internal promotions, and facilitate other job-related decisions. These assessments were used to measure emotional, motivational, interpersonal, and attitudinal characteristics and were concerned with affective or nonintellectual behavior (Black, 1994). Caggiano (1998) indicated that psychometric tests are now used on a wider variation of job types in more management situations, and that personality surveys are strategic instruments to aid in designing employee career paths, implementing better functioning work teams, and repairing miscommunications within companies. Best and Kahn (1998) wrote that self-report instruments such as personality scales provided particular questions or statements that participants checked by way of their individual responses. The scores attained from these type of instruments have been shown or are assumed to measure specific personality traits or tendencies of the participant.

Borofsky (1993) reported that psychological tests and other assessment procedures were defined by several criteria relevant to their development and selection. The American Psychological Association's Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing has implemented a fundamental model of standards for the use of psychological tests as well as other types of assessments such as interviews, reference checking, and background investigation techniques.

Mancebo (1992) indicated that generally all types of pre-employment tests were identified by three major categories: general ability, skill, and personality trait.

Used most often to measure knowledge and experience, general ability tests seek to measure intelligence, technical knowledge, and training mastery. Sometimes referred to as proficiency tests, skills tests measure specific skills directly related to job activities. Skills tests were used as a negative screening tool to eliminate applicant's who don't meet a minimum standard. Often referred to as interest inventories or surveys, personality trait tests evaluate personality characteristics and traits that relate measurably to aspects of job performance.

Application of Personality Assessment

A great deal of evidence supports the notion that pre-employment psychological screening is an effective tool to assist an organization in recruiting the best suited applicant for a particular position (Borofsky, 1993). Prewitt (1998) wrote that because of the time and expense involved in administering psychological tests, they are often given to prospective managers rather than lower-level employees whereby job skills tests are deemed more appropriate.

Psychological tests continue to steadily grow in use by corporate organizations because the standard interviews and tests are not enough to get a clear view of applicants' internal makeup. Some trainers resort to psychometric testing in their search for qualified employees, stronger leaders, and more cohesive teams (Kamen, 1997; Barbian, 2001).

Borofsky (1993) wrote:

Generally, the job interview seeks to identify applicants who are well-suited for a particular position and are therefore likely to perform the job in a safe and reliable manner. The interview also aims to isolate those applicants who are poorly suited for the position. However, instead of merely relying on personal judgment during

the interview process, interviewers can utilize psychological tests as a means of identifying suitable applicants. (p. 47)

Researchers of personality, psychology, and behavior have devoted attention to the design of scales to classify personality traits, theories to identify personality characteristics, and techniques that systematically relate personality traits to behavior (Plummer, 2000). An immense endeavor, test developers routinely spend months or years and millions of dollars on large-scale field studies before releasing a test (Prewitt, 1998). Hite and Villines (2000) indicated that employers today select from a variety of 2,500 different assessment instruments that are produced by the \$400 million personality assessment industry.

Cottle (1999) illustrated that corporate America is applying personality assessments at an increasing rate. Estimates from The Association of Test Publishers reported that personality testing was a \$400 million industry with more than 20 percent of the Society for Human Resource Management members reporting the use of some form of pre-employment testing. According to the American Management Association's 2000 survey, 14.6 percent of employers required job applicants to take a personality assessment that year, and close to half of all companies use some variation of a personality assessment tool (Clements, 2001). Hite and Villines (2000) wrote that 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies recently surveyed reported using some form of psychological or personality testing evaluation, and Cottle (1999) noted that personality testing remains the second-most (behind cognitive testing) widely used form of psychological measurement utilized in the hiring process.

Kamen (1997) reported that many assessments reveal general personality traits but fail to pinpoint the proper suitability a candidate may have for a particular position. Some tests successfully gauge managerial skill but don't measure motivation, and still other psychometric batteries contain questions that lack any connection to job performance. With hundreds of multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank assessments available, choosing the appropriate psychological test to utilize for hiring may be as complicated as hiring the perfect candidate. Human resource, corporate, business, and industry professionals must be willing to scrutinize from the multitudes of tests.

Prewitt (1998) illustrated that it is possible for companies to compose their own pre-employment tests furnished with predictive validity, but unless there's a great deal of money, expertise, and time to devote to in-house tests, companies should depend on expert consultants and published tests. Bates (2002) illustrated this point by writing:

Thousands of personality tests are available commercially. In order to take advantage of them however, human resource professionals and executives must navigate a sometimes bewildering maze of jargon and claims by test vendors and consultants. Yet many HR professionals lack the background in psychology and statistics to evaluate the value of various tests or the claims of vendors or consultants who recommend them. (p. 28)

As noted by Bates, expert consultants and published tests provide predictive validity over in-house assessments.

There are two criterion to apply when administering psychological tests. First, all procedures must be valid or scientifically accurate. Second, procedures must be reliable

or consistent. Organizations need to ensure that a test complies to legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991. The possibility of inaccurate results due to education level, illiteracy, or disability should be minimized, and applicants should complete a psychological test prior to the interview for best results (Borofsky, 1993).

The past decade has shown researchers the genuine value of personality testing in candidate selection. This is largely due to the acknowledgement of two personality traits—conscientiousness and emotional stability thought to be useful for predicting various critical work behaviors—such as performance, teamwork, integrity, and customer service. Essentially, job applicant’s measuring high in conscientiousness and emotional stability will allow human resource professionals lower voluntary turnover rates (Hoel, 2004). It’s the less obvious behavioral competencies such as the ability to work under pressure and exceptional communication skills rather than job skills that allows employee’s to experience growth within an organization. Hoel further illustrated that in the current competitive labor market, employers are beginning to note the importance of personal characteristics that match if not exceed the importance of technical skills and experience. Caudron (1997) wrote:

The idea that personal competencies count in the work place isn’t new. The Institute for Personality Assessment and Research at the University of California at Berkeley was conducting research in the 1940s to determine the ability of personality to predict work performance. Founded in part by the U.S. government, the research determined such things as what kinds of people would make good behind-the-lines secret agents during the war. (p. 20)

If personality assessments are being used to predict future work performance, then what other personality characteristics should be assessed prior to employment?

Wagner (2000) has written that personality traits such as emotional stability and conscientiousness are the best predictors of organizational turnover. Because conscientious employees are generally responsible and reliable, they are more likely to exhibit organizational involvement and commitment. People with these two traits are less likely to leave an organization voluntarily.

Connolly (2002) found that a job candidates emotional intelligence (EI) must be considered before placing him or her in a new work role citing five key personality characteristics representative of candidates with high emotional intelligence: 1. self-awareness, 2. motivation, 3. self regulation, 4. social skills, and 5. empathy. Research has revealed that an employee's EI is twice as important as cognitive abilities and technical skills (Connolly, 2002).

The Filene Research Institute sponsored a study by Murray R. Barrick of the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business that revealed the effects of pre-employment testing (Barrick, 2003). Barrick's study reported that attitudinal, behavior characteristics as well as biographical information (i.e., biodata) can be reliable predictors of performance and turnover. Workers who possess these qualities generally seek more responsibility and challenge at work, may exhibit greater integrity, are more service oriented, and are less likely to occupy themselves with irresponsible or counter productive work behaviors. An individual's propensity to remain on the job has been directly related to their emotional stability and level of conscientiousness. In the study, Barrick argued that potential negative consequences of prior hiring decisions result in

problems from the beginning, while positive value added performance results from initial good hiring decisions.

Personality Assessment in Business and Industry

Clements (2001) identified the reason behind the growing popularity of personality evaluations. Clements noted that because of the tight labor market, employers are increasingly concerned about keeping their current employees and keen on avoiding unsuitable hires. Geddes (2001) has written that employees have always been a key asset to any organization, but today, organizations realize that their people are the most important asset. Therefore, the single most critical workforce challenge for organizational leaders is employee retention. Johnson & Kleiner (2000) reported that when the cost of retaining employees is considered, personality tests become even more critical for every aspect of a job. The Saratoga Institute based in California determined that the average replacement cost of an exempt employee is approximately \$9,000. Clearly, preventing turnover saves organizations money and improves the organizational bottom line.

Arvey and Murphy (1998) reported that psychologists have been focused on the issues of defining, understanding, and evaluating performance of individuals in work contexts for a long time. Caudron, (1997) noted that industrial psychologists have diligently pursued the notion that personal competencies contribute to occupational success. Kamen (1997) wrote that the interest in emotional review moves forward because of the high cost of recruiting as well as the friction that is caused by a misguided hire.

Due to the growing groups of psychologists, consultants, and test publishers, an increasing number of employers are implementing psychological tests that measure broad

personality traits, from honesty to self-confidence. Barbian (2001) noted that nearly every segment of academia, industry, and government has to some degree attempted to measure and link individual characteristics to on-the-job potential. Today, personality assessment, mental measurement, or psychometric testing is not only commonplace in the recruiting process, but also influences if the employee gets transferred, mentored, or promoted. The organizational objective is always consistent: predict a worker's potential strengths for a particular work role and foretell their future behavior.

Caudron (1997) illustrated that recruiters must determine the unique blend of skills and competencies requisite of an open position during the initial recruitment process, as all jobs require a worker's combination of skills and competencies. Furthermore, determining the requisite skills for a position is simple compared to the difficulty in determining the appropriate competencies required of a position.

Top Jobs, a British based on-line job site questioned how significant personality was in job performance. The firm found the top three reasons employees quit or under-perform at work were: bad relationships with their bosses and poor fit with their jobs or company culture. All of these reasons have their roots in personality rather than skill, knowledge, or qualification (Yoon, 2000).

Wagner (2000) wrote that potential hires in the past have been traditionally assessed on their experience, their skills, and their appearance, now thought to be a miniscule element of the big picture and further noted that an impressive 50 to 70 percent of most job qualifications are more inherent in personality than in skill. Appropriate behavioral traits remain the least-known assets in a decision-makers arsenal who lacks an objective assessment and ultimately, good or bad job performance rests on how well an

individual's personality meshes with the job. Behavioral assessments provide the potential for managing and motivating people and matching the right individual with the right position.

When a job candidate's personality attributes are matched with the behavioral requirements of a position, positive performance will occur naturally. In general, managers will understand their employee's needs if they utilize behavioral testing. This in turn will create more alignment up and down the organization (Wagner, 2000).

Caudron (1997) reported that fueling the inspiration behind personality-based assessment is the urge to develop a cohesive all for one and one for all corporate structure. How do companies determine the right personality requisite of a job? How are personality competencies different from skills? How can an applicant be accurately assessed for the right personality for a particular position?

Hiring for personality requires a structured recruitment process that clearly identifies the skills and competencies of a position prior to employment. In so doing, it is important for recruiters to understand the difference between a skill and a competency. Fundamental capabilities such as the ability to communicate effectively, withstand stress, think logically, and use good judgment define competencies. Workers generally use these relatively enduring personal capacities during work regardless of what types of job they're performing. In addition, a person's work approach doesn't change during their work lives. Skills as opposed to competencies are abilities that do change depending on the particular job and tasks required. Skills can be taught and learned, unlike personal competencies that are hard wired into an individual's personality. A person's personal

competencies form their overall approach to work and therefore warrant being measured (Caudron, 1997).

Tracking more than 520 people for up to 20 years, Richard Nelson, a marketing professor at San Francisco State University found that tests can predict an employee's future success with 82 to 92 percent accuracy, and interviews provide accuracy only about 14 percent of the time. In addition, traditional methods such as interviews, experience, education, and academic achievements showed less than 20 percent accuracy in predicting employee success in a study published in *Psychological Bulletin* (Mancebo, 1992).

Borofsky (1993) noted that when selecting a particular assessment procedure, the first critical criterion is to ensure that all procedures are scientifically accurate and valid. Validity simply defines how accurate a procedure is in assessing what it purports to assess. Therefore, when a job applicant is screened for their likelihood of productive and reliable behavior, it's imperative to select only criterion-related procedures previously validated using a specific model of behavior criteria (Borofsky, 1993).

It is also important to conduct additional studies to ensure a procedure has been cross-validated. By using different people from those originally used to validate a procedure, the cross-validation process will increase the likelihood of an accurate selection procedure when covering a broad range of individuals and situations. The second criterion to apply when choosing an assessment is to ensure that the procedures are reliable or consistent. Reliability in this context refers to the technical term that describes the consistency at which a procedure assesses what it claims to assess (Borofsky, 1993).

In terms of assessment, there are five different processes of collecting information about a person's personality. Like intelligence and abilities assessment, considerable research and test development has been fostered from various conceptual models of personality psychology. These major models are the trait, psychodynamic, situational, phenomenological, and interactional (Walsh, 1995).

Walsh and Betz (1995) reported that the trait model has clearly dominated personality research over the years, and the majority of objective personality tests that exist today are based upon trait methodology. Because of its practicality and ease of application and implementation, the trait model is used more than other models. Furthermore, personality researchers lean toward a trait-model position that supports their belief that individual's may be characterized in terms of 9 or 10 well-selected traits (Walsh & Betz, 1995).

Though proving worthwhile in advancing knowledge and understanding about social behavior, the trait model approach has its limitations. Because the trait approach is static, mechanistic, and point-in-time oriented, concerns have arisen regarding its ability to define human behavior and development. Nevertheless, the trait approach is responsible for many useful person-centered inventories that produce meaningful information about people (Walsh & Betz, 1995).

Walsh and Betz (1995) described the psychodynamic model as the interpretive basis for projective techniques that were designed to measure a person's drives, motives, and defenses. Projective techniques assume that an individual will respond to ambiguous or vague stimuli portraying a particular personality style. Generally projective techniques are more difficult to administer and interpret than objective techniques, and are

problematic in elements of reliability and validity. Despite limitations of projective techniques, they provide a useful and meaningful system of collecting information about individuals.

The situational or behavioral model describes personality as a person's actual overt behavior. It assumes that behavior is essentially a function of past experiences. In the situational or behavioral model, past behavior is regarded as the best predictor of future behavior. Thus, within this model, a person's personality can be defined by actual behavioral performance or what a person actually does (Walsh & Betz, 1995).

The phenomenological model focuses on a person's subjective perceptions of their environment as well as person factors such as self concept and subjective experiences. This model maintains that the chief determinant of behavior is an individual's self-concept or picture of self, and that their behavior will be reasonably consistent across different situations. Because subjective experiences are extremely difficult to measure or quantify, few tests and inventories have been developed based upon the phenomenological model. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to operationalize the model by developing self-report inventories such as the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Walsh & Betz, 1995).

The interactional model states that human behavior is generally influenced by several determinants based on both situational and person-centered elements. It emphasizes person-situation interactions and notes that behavior is based upon continuous people-centered interaction within changing environments and situations. This model presents problematic measurement issues because of the innate challenge of

developing inventories that simultaneously consider individuals, responses, and changing situations (Walsh & Betz, 1995).

The key to long-term employee satisfaction and retention is to make correct hiring decisions (Caggiano, 1998; Kamen, 1997). Marvin (1992) noted that many companies regard pre-employment testing as an art form. They are equipped with a battery of personality profiles, psychological assessments, and honesty tests that explore every corner of an individual's psyche in an attempt to determine the best candidate for a job opening. Screening tests aid in identifying the most likely candidates to be successful in various positions. By testing, human resource managers and hiring committee's can separate the potential candidates from those who are not as likely to be productive.

Johnson and Kleiner (2000) reported that personality testing by an employer can prove beneficial and contribute to the success of an organization. Employing the right individual's with the right qualities at the right time is essentially the best formula for success.

Stanton and Matthews (1995) illustrated that personality assessment may provide an efficient mechanism for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of workers in order to focus on areas that need further attention and training. These tests may also serve individuals in making career decisions by inspiring them to recognize their preferred work situation. Personality assessment is a tool that enables an individual to focus more keenly on suitable occupations by providing them with the knowledge of their own traits that match those required or desired by different occupations. Nevertheless, because of the inherent difficulty of uncovering personality traits through one time testing, the use of

personality tests in such activities as organizational development, personnel selection, and career advice warrants careful analysis.

Hankey (2001) advised that hiring managers consult with a competent counsel to avoid trouble when conducting employee screening. Personality tests are not foolproof screening measures. The tests should not be used instead of, but only in addition to, traditional assessment approaches.

The American Psychological Association (1995, 1996) reported that researchers note that creativity, integrity, leadership, cooperation, and attendance play a significant role in a worker's job suitability and productivity. They also concur that personality is more important than intelligence in predicting some aspects of performance and have moved from an initial position of skepticism to a position of confidence concerning the contribution that personality can make in personnel selection (Robertson & Smith, 2001).

Islamabad (2002) illustrated that the most critical of temperamental and motivational factors measured by personality assessment are assertiveness, sociability, sense of urgency, stamina, dependence, and maturity. The traditional application of psychometric testing for career advice or recruitment has been based on the measurement of intelligence or personality. First, these qualities are assessed and then they are related to the precise job requirements in order to evaluate how a person with those traits will adjust to the demands of his or her new position. The testing of an applicant's personality is emerging as an important component in a job interview.

Fletcher (1993) found that learning to identify and use people's patterns of high performance promotes a respect for individual differences in the workplace. It is through the recognition of these patterns that managers can come to understand the characteristic

differences that actually make an impact on how effective a worker conducts him or herself in the workplace.

Types of Personality Assessments

Black (1994) found that there are hundreds of personality tests in use today that can be classified in two different groups: objective and projective. There are two categories of objective tests: normative and ipsative. A normative test consists of questions that correspond to specific qualities or scales being measured, and each question is scored for a specific scale. Ipsative tests consist of questions that require an individual to choose between two answers that measure for dissimilar qualities or scales. A person may score high on one quality and low on another by choosing one response over another.

Black (1994) described common objective tests as paper and pencil tests or self-report inventories that are typically comprised of true and false questions. Common objective tests are interest inventories that seek information about an individual's interest in various activities. Sapp (2002) stated that objective tests are composed of test items that are scored in a particular way such as multiple choice questions. Subjective tests that utilize projective techniques are scored solely on the basis of a clinician's judgment.

Developed in 1974, the objective test Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII) consisted of 325 items that are drawn from various areas of life: activities and activity preference, occupational, school subjects, personal characteristics, amusements, and types of people. Six occupational themes comprise the scoring: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Scores offer an individual observation into their occupational interests. Walsh & Betz (1995) wrote:

The basic assumption of the projective approach is that the individual's responses to vague or ambiguous stimuli or tasks will tend to reflect his or her basic personality. Psychologists who use projective techniques attempt to obtain a general impression of an individual's personality by focusing on the outstanding or significant features in a pattern of responses; an attempt is made to identify consistencies across a series of responses. (p. 129)

Projective assessments have been used in personality assessments for business and industry.

The most common normative tests are Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ) and the California Psychological Inventory (CPI). The most common ipsative tests are the Gordon Personal Profile (GPP), the Gordon Personal Inventory (GPI) and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) (Black, 1994).

Black (1994) categorized these tests as Objective-Normative Tests and Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire. First published in 1949, the 16 Factor Personality Questionnaire yields sixteen separate scores on traits believed to be fundamental to an individual. Rather than scoring questions on their face content, they are likely to measure one of the sixteen factors. This questionnaire discloses a person's managerial style and not their motivation or drive strength. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was the most widely used personality inventory and is scored empirically related to external criterion.

The MMPI consisted of 550 questions covering areas such as health, psychosomatic symptoms, sexual, religious, and political attitudes, occupational and marital issues, phobias and delusions, sadistic and masochistic tendencies. Answers are significant only after being arranged statistically in a personality profile and grouped according to personality scales. A new version, the MMPI-2 has been developed that eliminates outdated or offensive test questions (Black, 1994).

Black (1994) reported that The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was developed following World War II by Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, the MBTI is a normative forced choice test consisting of 100 questions that require an individual to choose between two descriptive terms or phrases that describe the same trait or scale. The responses are scored on a single scale and are equally acceptable. Test takers are divided into sixteen personality types defined by four dimensions: extroverted or introverted, thinking or feeling, sensing or intuitive and perceiving or judging. The dimensions measure a person's predispositions or tendencies rather than their intelligence, motivation, maturity, or mental health.

The Occupational Personality Questionnaire is the most recently designed self-report inventory developed in 1981. This questionnaire incorporated factors relevant to occupational use and offers the test taker a detailed profile of a variety of characteristics (Black, 1994).

Black (1994) noted that The California Psychological Inventory is an inventory that measures normal personality functioning and draws close to half of its questions divided into four behavior classes: self-assurance, socialization and maturity, achievement potential, and personal attitudes.

Objective-Ipsative Tests

Ipsative tests provide the respondent with two options of equal social desirability and involve forced choice questions that must be made between descriptions scored on different scales. The Gordon Personal Profile and the Gordon Personal Inventory are ipsative test inventories developed in the 1950s. These inventories yielded four dimensions associated with employment success. The Gordon Personal Profile (GPP) outlines characteristics of ascendancy, responsibility, emotional stability, and sociability. The Gordon Personal Inventory (GPI) outlines cautiousness, original thinking, personal relations, and vigor (Black, 1994).

The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule was developed in 1938 by Henry A. Murray at the Harvard Psychological Clinic. It is a self-administered assessment. This assessment contains 225 pairs of statements that participants choose one of each pair that patterns his or her likes or dislikes (Black, 1994).

Examples of the Projective Test type are the Rorschach Test, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), and Draw a Person or Human Figure Drawing Test. These tests require an individual to interpret ambiguous stimuli that would generally illicit a variety of different responses (Black, 1994).

Performance Tests

A performance test asks an individual to perform a structured task. Two major differences between these tests and objective and projective tests are that they are task oriented as opposed to report-oriented. The test by its design conveys that a correct solution exists (Black, 1994).

Functional testing seeks to aim testing at the meaningful unitary structures of personality that emerge. Over 40 personality factors including primary and secondary structures have proven measurable. Therefore, a structure of personality exists in and of itself, that may reveal various degrees of accuracy respective of the particular medium of measurement used (Cattell & Johnson, 1986). Robertson and Smith (2001) cited various personnel selection methods, including personality questionnaires, cognitive ability tests, interviews, assessment centers and bio-data that have all exhibited a reasonably high level of validity.

Shelley and Cohen (1986) stated that the general assumption regarding psychometric tests, projective tests, and other tests is that they are all in competition with one another. A tester will use and believe in one type of test or another. However, no test has yet to be developed to measure individual differences or personality completely. Various psychometric tests and projective tests are more suspect than others, but projective tests prove more valuable because they allow for more individualistic and complex responses. Walsh and Betz (1995) wrote that projective techniques seek to assess the whole person in terms of personality, needs, emotions, conflicts, and intellectual processes. Additionally, projective techniques attempt to draw from unconscious processes by exploring a person's fantasy and make-believe world. The basic idea is that vague and unstructured tasks will assist a person in verbalizing thoughts and needs not previously verbalized.

Reliability, Validity and Legality

Andrulis and Bajtelsmit (1977) indicated that reliability and validity are the two fundamental characteristics of a solid test. Anyone who selects tests, interprets scores, or

who has test score decision authority should have a thorough understanding of these characteristics. Reliability is defined as consistency of measurement that involves performance stability rather than the effects of defective instruments and chance factors that influence test scores. The fundamental concern of reliability is to determine 'true' versus 'error' elements present in test scores. Viswesvaran and Ones (2000), refer to reliability as the test scores obtained, not the actual instrument itself. Andrulis and Bajtelsmit (1977) wrote that validity is concerned with the degree to which a test measures what it is designed to measure, and how useful the particular test is at inferring other behavior.

The most significant element of test construction is validity. Where reliability centers on issues of consistency and accuracy, validity assesses what exactly the test is proposing to report about. Though it is possible for a test to be reliable without being valid, a necessary prerequisite for validity is that a test must first achieve reliability. Therefore, a valid test is able to accurately measure the variable it intends to measure (Groth-Marnat, 1984).

Prewitt (1998) found that questions that are valid and accurate are absolutely requisite of a good pre-employment test, as all pre-employment tests must have 'predictive' validity to be legally bulletproof. A tester must confirm that a test measures the traits it attempts to measure in addition to predicting the requisite behavior of the job in question.

In 1954, in an effort to standardize psychological tests and diagnostic techniques, the American Psychological Association (1995, 1996) outlined four aspects of validity: content, predictive, concurrent, and construct. Predictive and concurrent validity have

since been combined under the term criterion-related validity. Content validity in its initial definition referred to the field of educational measurement and has been adjusted from referring to prescribed curriculum to referring to work related behaviors and/or skills. This concept is relatively simple: determine what worker's are supposed to know and do and develop/select a measurement scale that samples those specific aptitudes and abilities. The success of this approach is largely dependent on successfully determining the appropriate content of the job (Shultz, Riggs & Kottke, 1998).

There are compelling reasons for researchers to further explore the construct validity issues of tests and diagnostic techniques more extensively. On the scientific front, it is important to understand the reasons for relationships between predictor variables and criteria related to performance (e.g. supervisory ratings, promotions, organizational citizenship) attachment (e.g. turnover, absenteeism, commitment) and well being (e.g. job satisfaction). The identification of key predictor constructs assessed by different selection methods is important in understanding the key attributes linked with criteria (Robertson & Smith, 2001).

The kinds of validity and reliability required for tests of this variety rests largely on the nature of the particular test and its intended use. Various models of validity may or may not be critical depending on how a chosen test will be used. We can assume that a test's standard error of measurement, and stability of items will determine reliability. Other forms of validity rely upon the actual type of test such as multiple choice, interview, etc. (Best & Kahn, 1998).

Personality assessments are controversial at best. Reliability in psychometrics is based on the notion that a test will produce similar results when it's applied several times

(Caggiano, 1998). Groth-Marnat, (1984) wrote that a test's reliability refers to its degree of consistency, stability, and accuracy, and examines the question of whether scores obtained by one person will be the same if they are reexamined using the same test on different occasions. The fundamental concept of reliability is the possible range of error defined as 'error of measurement' of a single score. The error of measurement is an estimate of the range of possible fluctuation that is anticipated in an individual's score. Furthermore, there will always be a degree of error in a test system resulting from factors such as poor administration, mood variations of participant's, and misreading of test items. Moreover, Shelley & Cohen (1986) noted that classical test theories support that no one person is completely consistent. The majority of psychometric tests don't correlate perfectly with themselves as a result of subject variability-even over the time of taking the test.

Groth-Marnat (1984) wrote:

There are two main issues relating to the degree of error in a test. The first is that there is an inevitable, natural variation in human performance. Usually the variability is less for measurement of ability than for those of personality.

Whereas ability variables (intelligence, mechanical aptitude, etc.) show gradual changes resulting from growth and development, many personality traits are much more highly dependent on factors such as mood. (p. 9)

Thus, the mood of a person on a given day could influence the responses made and this may not be a true indicator of a person's personality.

The second issue relating to reliability is that of the necessarily imprecise methods of psychological testing. Contrary to the fields of the 'hard' sciences where direct

measurement can be made, measurements are often indirect using the constructs of psychometric assessment (Groth-Marnat, 1984). Best and Kahn (1998) reported that generally, self-report instruments such as personality scales yield scores that have been shown or are assumed to measure specific personality traits or tendencies. Personality scales of this nature may have limited value as a result of people's inability or unwillingness to report their individual reactions accurately or objectively. Furthermore, due to inadequate theories of personality on which various personality inventories are based, additional limitations may exist.

Plummer (2000) reported that in addition to problematic definitions of personality central to the true meaning of personality, the mere proliferation of personality batteries, inventories, and scales points to the fact that we simply don't have one accurate reliable, and valid way of measuring people's personalities. Pre-employment assessments such as personality and aptitude tests offer useful insight into the potential fit ability of a job applicant and a particular job. Nevertheless, when improperly handled, tests are not infallible and can render a company vulnerable to litigation and lawsuits.

Aptitude tests are generally less likely to be subject to legal challenge because if an applicant is solely tested on the requirements of a specific job, the subjectivity will be minimized. From a legal standpoint, personality testing presents more of a gray area of concern for organizations. A test must show viability and be void of any disparate impact on minorities, females, or protected classes under the law. Disparate impact occurs when testers interpretations of the test language varies widely because of their different cultures, backgrounds, national origins, and education. Tests are then vulnerable to challenges in terms of litigation. To minimize vulnerability, testing entities must go

through the validation procedures set forth by the EEOC (Flynn, 2002). O'Meara (1994) illustrated this point by writing:

Employment discrimination allegations against an employer using a personality test might take the form of a 'disparate impact' action. In such an action, a seemingly neutral employment practice that is shown to have an adverse impact on a protected group must be defended by the employer on the basis that it is job-related for the position in question and consistent with business necessity (p. 2).

Thus, it is important to understand the legal ramifications of using personality tests as a screening tool for hiring decisions.

Experts consistently counsel caution in the arena of pre-employment psychological testing. No test provides a magic solution to a company's turnover problems. Furthermore, if the wrong test is administered or an inappropriate question is asked, a company is exposed to a potential threat of a lawsuit (Prewitt, 1998).

As organizations seek insight into worker's personalities, there is a heightened unease among employees and civil rights groups as to whether personality assessments violate privacy and anti-discrimination laws. Others are concerned that personality test results will cause unfair firings and demotions (Kamen, 1997). Bates (2002) noted that employers need to carefully scrutinize their use of personality tests to avoid trouble with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and specific guidelines of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, in addition to numerous state laws intended to prevent discrimination and other unfair practices. McConnell (1980) wrote that:

It is illegal and unethical in the US today to discriminate against people because of their skin color, sex, religion, or ethnic background. However, it is NOT illegal or unethical to discriminate against people because of their scores on psychological tests-and most of these tests have a strong cultural bias to them.

(p. 608)

This cultural bias would require that tests be designed appropriately for their intended audience.

As McGrew (1995) noted, personality is as individual as fingerprints; there is no exact formula that defines the countless characteristics that compose a person's personality. Furthermore, everyone has an identifiable behavior pattern called personality style. Further, every job also has a personality of its own, just like the applicant chosen to fill it. McGrew described four styles that uniquely blend every individual's personality; dominant, expressive, analytical, and amiable. The author noted that generally, two out of the four styles emerges to largely govern a person's communication and behaviors. McGrew further wrote that though everyone has the capacity to express themselves in any of the four styles, given different circumstances and situations, people overwhelmingly express themselves with their primary and secondary personality styles. Swiercinsky (1985) found that:

Throughout the years psychological tests have cycled in popularity through bane and panacea. As with most ideas, extremes of fervor produce a loss of perspective. Those who would consider tests useless and those who regard them as diagnostic magic are wrong. Tests are tools of the clinician, as are pad and pen. The skill and sensitivity of the professional involves applying the tools

appropriately, within the context of clinical art. It is a poor clinician who blames diagnostic failures entirely on his tests, or who relies on tests without the skill to use them wisely. The professional who performs psychological assessments must develop a clear attitude about tests that respects their usefulness and limitations, and respects the multifaceted and multi-factorial nature of behavior—even behavior segments. Testing is a procedure for segmenting and managing complexity, not denying or reducing it. Tests define behavior or personality and cognitive segments; assessments put this together within a coherent whole. (p. 4)

These statements illustrate that users of psychological assessments need the proper education and experiences in order to use them in an appropriate fashion. Psychometric testing data is always tentative, inferential, and problematic and while providing answers, raises many questions at the same time. A thoughtful practitioner sees psychometric testing as one tool in a more comprehensive toolkit to be administered specifically for a solution to a defined problem (Tulip, 2002). So why use psychological tests at all? As Prewitt (1988) reported, when used properly, psychological tests may be the best predictor of job success. Tests have the built in advantages such as lack of bias, which other means of selection don't have. A test can counterbalance interviewers stereotypes by asking identical questions and applying identical standards to every applicant (Prewitt, 1998).

The future of psychometric testing, as reported by Tulip (2002), is likely to be increasingly web based centered diverging into two separate systems designed specifically for recruitment or development. Web based recruitment testing systems will

evolve and develop sophisticated security measures of implementing these processes to assure viable reporting of personality data.

Summary

Islamabad (2002) stated that psychometric testing has gained measurable legitimacy in corporate corridors in recent times because of the sidelining of IQ in favor of EQ (Emotional quotient) and, now, SQ (spiritual quotient). Islamabad noted that psychometrics is an element of psychology that is concerned with the measurement and interpretation of psychological variables such as aptitudes, traits, and attitudes that are preferred for specific jobs.

Swiercinsky (1985) reported that today the focus has shifted from measuring differences of individual's to exploring the complex intrapersonal characteristics that define individual uniqueness. Evolving from loosely structured and applied association tests and objective inventories that categorize people, personality assessment is theoretically based in projective techniques and actuarial methods.

Broadly considered, the assessment of personality requires a synthesis of aspects of an individual's functioning that contribute to the formulation and expression of thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. In the assessment of an individual, cognitive and emotional functioning may be considered separately, but their influences are interrelated. (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, p.125).

Geddes (2001) reported that an employer's use of personality testing for retention purposes as well as during the hiring process has become increasingly popular. Geddes

wrote that:

The personality or behavior someone brings to the workplace plays a major role in living up to their job description and working with others. Knowing how to read oneself as well as the rest of the team can not only eliminate questions about performance but will benefit greatly in accomplishing the end-result-helping the company succeed (p. 2).

Sokal (1987) noted that standardized psychological testing plays a major role in current American society, particularly with respect to employment practices and education.

Though, Hayward (1997) acknowledged that:

The refinements of personnel questions are too often neglected by managers who look only at the qualifications and experience on a resume, and do not give sufficient thought to matching the character of the individual with the character of the job and the need of the moment. (p. 62)

During the 1960s and 1970s individuals with most concern about psychological testing worried over the problematic implication towards minorities and the various public and private programs designed to help them. During the past decade, the changing social climate has diverted attention to broad concerns about implication of testing for the largely white middle class (Sokal, 1987). McGill, (1990) wrote that:

The legal issues potentially arising from these tests are certain to be intensely contested issues in the area of employment law. It is a violation of Title VII to use any employee selection method that has a disproportionate impact on a protected

group, unless the employer can prove that the method is necessary for its business (p. 227).

Shelley and Cohen (1986) found that we generally attribute fairly consistent personality traits when we describe people. Though the 1970s brought great emphasis on therapy and growth that led psychologists to advocate change, the aim of psychological tests is still the measurement of the underlying stable traits in a human being.

Wareham (1987) noted that many people feel that humans are much too complex to categorize into types and object to being pigeonholed in this manner. Wareham reported that these individuals claim that it is demeaning to classify people into types and further noted that like it or not, homo-sapiens can be successfully typed, and typed very accurately. In fact, Wareham wrote that psychologists now agree that scientific typing can be the key to appraising anyone—executive colleague, friend, lover, spouse, even children. People can be sorted into clear types when the why of success or failure is known. This allows for accurate professional assessments.

Andrulis and Bajtelsmit (1977) illustrated that there are over a dozen notable test publishing houses that employ hundreds of professionals who diligently search for a more objective, refined measuring instrument. Today, literally thousands of personality, achievement, interest, and aptitude tests exist where there were only a handful fifty or sixty years ago. At one time only several elements of personality were assessed, now hundreds of personality components are measured. “In all, psychological testing has been an art, not a science, and therefore should be regarded as one tool, not the tool, in the evaluation process” (Wareham, 1987, p. 8).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The researcher reviewed and reported on available literature about the fundamentals of personality theory, the history of psychometric testing, and personality assessment usage in business and industry. The researcher reviewed a comprehensive listing of state licensed regional health and human service organizations from the Pacific Northwest Region link in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/>. From the Regional list of organizations, the researcher categorized organizations based on the different services they provide to the community. These service categories consist of programs to address abuse and neglect, caregiver support, disability, drug/alcohol/chemical dependency, education assistance, emergency help, and medical care. The researcher applied a random number generator process to each of the seven service categories and developed a set of three organizations from each category to obtain a total of twenty-one organizations to contact.

In the event an organization chose not to participate in the study, the researcher applied the random number generator to that category, and another organization was selected. The researcher contacted each of the twenty-one organizations by telephone and

attained a viable contact name within the company who was involved with the use of personality assessments.

The researcher then requested consent from the contact person at each organization to conduct a telephone survey using a 5-minute survey questionnaire. A Likert-type survey was used to examine the nature, frequency, context of usage, and administration of personality/behavioral assessments within each organization. The intent of the survey was to determine if responses to questions represent a trend toward a standardization of personality assessment use and measures in the workplace, purposes of recruitment, and/or retention practices of human service organizations.

Following the researcher's telephone interviews and responses to the survey, responses were classified into data categories to examine the consistency of personality assessment usage, the contexts in which they were used, who administered the tests and for what purpose: employee development or organizational recruitment and retention. Responses from the group were illustrated in text for each question along with the mean score for each Likert-type question asked on the survey. Descriptive responses were also recorded and provided for each question asked during the interview. The researcher elected not to provide a graphical illustration of this data after conferring with the thesis committee members.

Statement of the Procedures

The researcher began searching local library databases for texts related to personality testing using the following key terms: personality assessments, psychometric testing, personality theory, and personality in the workplace.

The researcher reviewed texts available that appeared applicable to this study.

The researcher called Sno-Isle Regional Library System and reserved applicable texts.

The researcher began searching the Internet using Netscape, Yahoo, and Google search engines using key terms: personality, testing, personality assessment, personality and work, and psychometric testing.

The researcher searched King County Library System using key terms: personality and assessment.

The researchers again searched Sno-Isle Regional Library System www.sno-isle.org for magazines, newspaper, periodicals, and research journals.

The researcher accessed notable texts about psychometrics, psychological tests, tests score measurement, business and industry, psychodiagnostics, work performance, personality theory, personality testing, tests and assessments.

The researcher accessed INFOTRAC database and searched the Expanded Academic ASAP using search terms: personality assessment, psychometric testing, personality and work, and employment testing.

The researcher accessed EBSCO Research Databases using search terms: personality assessment, psychometric testing, personality and work, and employment testing.

The researcher searched Sno-Isle Regional Library System General Reference Center, ProQuest magazines, articles, and research journals.

The researcher searched the University of Washington databases using the search terms of: personality, employment testing, and psychometric screening.

The researcher accessed INFOTRAC database and narrowed the search to Gale Group Database. This search was further restricted to the Business and Company Resource

Center using the search terms: psychometric testing, personality assessment, personality testing, personality and work, and employment testing.

The researcher then developed a methodology to collect data on the use of personality assessments in human service organizations within the greater Pacific Northwest Region. This methodology consisted of categorizing human service organizations based on the services they provided to the community, creating a set of (21) organizations by using a random number generator to select three contacts from seven service categories, and the development of a Likert-type survey to address the research questions contained within this study.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

One hundred percent of the twenty-one organizations asked to complete the survey willingly agreed to do so. All twenty-one, or one hundred percent of the organizations surveyed answered *No* to question one. *Does your organization currently utilize some form of personality and/or behavioral measuring practice?* If no was the answer to question one, participants were asked to move forward to question five on the questionnaire. Therefore, data collected from the twenty-one questionnaires was represented by answers to questions one, and five through fourteen.

Question five, a four- part question, *what do you feel are the challenges that organizations face when using personality tests?* The first category, reliability of testing revealed that three out of twenty-one, or fourteen percent of the organizations strongly agreed that reliability of testing was a challenge for organizations, four out of twenty-one, or nineteen percent of the organizations agreed that reliability of testing was a challenge, and fourteen out of twenty-one, or sixty-six percent of the organizations surveyed responded with N/A, they had never used personality/behavioral assessments.

The second category, expense/cost of testing, revealed five out of twenty-one, or twenty-three percent of the organizations strongly agreed that the expense/cost of testing

was a challenge to organizations. Two out of twenty-one, or nine percent of the organizations agreed that expense/cost of testing was a challenge, and fourteen out of twenty-one, or sixty-six percent of the organizations responded with N/A because they had never used personality/behavioral assessments. The third category, tester/evaluator capability revealed that three out of twenty-one, or fourteen percent of the organizations strongly agreed that tester/evaluator capability of testing was a challenge. Nineteen percent, or four out of twenty-one of the organizations agreed that tester/evaluator capability of testing was a challenge, and fourteen out of twenty-one or sixty-six percent of the organizations surveyed responded with N/A, they had never used personality/behavioral assessments. The fourth category, legal concerns regarding testing revealed nine percent, or two out of twenty-one organizations strongly agreed that legal concerns of testing was a challenge. Twenty three percent, or five out of twenty-one of the organizations agreed that legal concerns of testing was a challenge, and fourteen out of twenty-one, or sixty-six percent of the organizations responded with N/A because they had never used personality/behavioral assessments.

Question six: *If personality tests are not currently administered, would you recommend them to your organization?* Nine percent or two out of twenty-one of the organizations would sometimes recommend personality tests to their organization. One out of twenty-one would seldom recommend them, and sixty-six percent would never recommend personality tests to their organization. Two out of twenty-one, or nine percent answered N/A.

Question seven: *Do you regard personality measuring practices (tests) to be a necessary element in the hiring process?* Responses to this question revealed three out of

twenty-one or fourteen percent of organizations would seldom regard personality measuring practices (tests) to be a necessary element in the hiring process, and eighteen out of twenty-one organizations or eighty-five percent would never regard personality measuring practices (tests) to be a necessary element in the hiring process.

Question eight: *Do you regard assessment of workers personalities to be a benefit to an organization?* Thirty-eight percent, or eight out of twenty-one would sometimes regard assessment of workers personalities a benefit to an organization, one out of twenty-one or four percent would seldom regard assessment of workers personalities a benefit to an organization. Fifty-seven percent, or twelve out of twenty-one would never regard assessment of workers personalities a benefit to an organization.

Question nine: *Do personality/behavioral tests provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job?* One out of twenty-one or four percent of the organizations reported that personality/behavioral tests always provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job. Nineteen percent or four out of twenty-one organizations noted that personality/behavioral tests sometimes provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job. Nine percent or two out of twenty-one of the organizations noted that personality/behavioral tests seldom provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job, and nineteen percent or four out of twenty-one organizations indicated that personality/behavioral tests never provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job. Ten out of twenty-one or forty-seven percent of the organizations answered N/A, never used personality/behavioral tests.

Question ten: *Would you recommend personality/behavioral assessment of worker's to other organizations?* Nineteen percent or four out of twenty-one

organizations would sometimes recommend personality/behavioral assessment of worker's to other organizations. Sixteen percent of the organization's would seldom recommend personality/behavioral assessment of worker's to other organizations, and nineteen percent of the organizations would never recommend personality/behavioral assessment of worker's to other organizations.

Question eleven was a three-part question stating: *Personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for:* Employee/self enrichment, employment screening, training and evaluation. One out of twenty-one organizations agreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment. Eighty percent or seventeen out of twenty-one organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment. Fourteen percent, or three out of twenty-one organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment. Four percent or one out of twenty-one organizations agreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employment screening. Eighty-five percent or eighteen out of twenty-one organizations, disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employment screening. Nine percent, or two out of twenty-one organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employment screening. Eighty percent or seventeen out of twenty-one organizations, disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for training and evaluation. Nineteen percent, or four out of twenty-one

organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for training and evaluation.

Question twelve: *Personality and/or behavioral assessments used during the recruitment process are indispensable in finding an appropriate employee for a position within an organization?* Eighty-five percent or eighteen out of twenty-one organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during the recruitment process are indispensable in finding an appropriate employee for a position within an organization. Fourteen percent, or three out of twenty-one organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during the recruitment process are indispensable in finding an appropriate employee for a position within an organization.

Question thirteen: *The results of personality and/or behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance?* Eighty percent, or seventeen out of twenty-one of the organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance. Fourteen percent, or three out of twenty-one organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance. Four percent, or one out of twenty-one of the organizations answered *don't know* if personality and/or behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance.

Question Fourteen: *Personality/behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance?* Four percent, or one out of twenty-one organizations strongly agreed personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance. Nine percent, or two out of twenty-one organizations agreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance. Seventy-one percent or fifteen out of twenty-one organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance, and fourteen percent, or three out of the twenty-one organizations strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance.

Chapter 5

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Restatement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to identify the uses of personality assessments and their resulting consequences on employment within Washington State registered health and human service organizations. This investigation reported on health and human service organizations utilizing psychometric testing within the organizational context. Specific to this study was personality or behavioral assessments administered when recruiting, evaluating, or retaining workers, the potential implications of behavioral/personality assessments on workers within the organization, and the organizational value perceived by testers that utilize forms of personality assessments. Specific questions answered by this research were:

1. What are the potential advantages of health and human service organization's administering behavioral/personality assessments for organizational recruitment purposes?
2. How does measuring worker's personality provide intrinsic value to the organization?
3. Are personality assessments viewed as strictly personal enrichment tools and not fundamental to the employment processes?

4. Who is responsible for the administration of psychometric testing such as personality assessments; in-house staff, outside firm, private consultant?
5. What are the organizational benefits of personality assessment?
6. Does reliability of testing, cost, or the capability of testers prevent organizations from assessing worker's personalities?

Discussion

Questionnaire responses revealed that eighty-five percent of the organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during the recruitment process were indispensable in finding an appropriate employee for a position within an organization. Furthermore, eighty-five percent of them would never regard personality measuring practices to be a necessary element in the hiring process and eighty percent of those surveyed disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance.

The responses noted that measuring workers personalities was not considered fundamental to the employment recruitment process nor is utilizing personality and/or behavioral assessments a key factor to fitting worker to job during the recruitment process. Consequently, questionnaire responses indicated an absence of any identifiable potential advantages of social service organizations administering behavioral and/or personality assessments for organizational recruitment purposes.

Eighty-five percent of the organizations reported that they disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employment screening. Seventy-one percent of the organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an

employee's performance, and fourteen percent strongly disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance. Furthermore, eighty percent of the organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for training and evaluation. This data represented indifference about the perceived intrinsic value of personality and/or behavioral assessments utilized as organizational tools.

The researcher examined responses to questions eleven and twelve to evaluate whether personality assessments are viewed as strictly employee enrichment tools as opposed to being a fundamental element of the employment processes. Responses revealed two percent of the organizations agreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment. Eighty percent of the organizations disagreed that personality and/or behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment, and fourteen percent of the organizations strongly disagreed that assessments should be administered in the workplace for employee/self enrichment.

One-hundred percent of the twenty-one organizations surveyed in this study reported that they do not currently utilize some form of personality and/or behavioral measuring practices. This finding suggested that the use of personality/behavioral assessments is less than prevalent at health and human service organizations. Questionnaire responses further revealed that specific State regulatory guidelines exist that prohibit or severely limit State registered health and human service organizations from administering psychometric testing to potential or current employees.

Responses to question eight revealed that thirty-eight percent of the organizations

surveyed would sometimes regard assessment of workers personalities to be a benefit to an organization, and fifty-seven percent of the organizations would never regard assessment of workers personalities to be a benefit to an organization. This data suggested that the organizations surveyed questioned the viability and validity of personality and/or behavioral assessments administered as workplace tools to identify potential problems with employee performance.

Responses to question five on the survey questionnaire further indicated that the reliability of testing, the cost, or the capability of tester's prevents organizations from assessing worker's personalities. The first category revealed that fourteen percent of the organizations strongly agreed that reliability of testing is a challenge for organizations. Nineteen percent of the organizations agreed that reliability of testing is a challenge, and sixty-six percent of the organizations surveyed responded with N/A, they had never used personality or behavioral assessments. The second category, expense and cost of testing, revealed that twenty-three percent of the organizations strongly agreed that the expense/cost of testing is a challenge to organizations, particularly the health and human service organizations of non-profit status. The fourth category, legal concerns regarding testing, revealed that twenty-three percent of the organizations surveyed agreed that legal concerns regarding testing is a barrier to the use of these assessments.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to provide HRD trainers and managers with an analysis of information regarding the various uses of personality and/or behavioral assessments administered at health and human service organizations registered with the State of Washington. This investigation sought to understand the psychometric testing

practices of health and human service organizations when recruiting, evaluating, or retaining their workers, the potential implications behavioral and/or personality assessments may have on workers within the organization, and the organizational value perceived by testers that utilize or have utilized forms of personality and/or behavioral assessments. This study assumed that human resource professionals at Washington State registered health and human service organizations utilize some form of personality assessment for recruitment, development, or retention purposes.

The assumptions made in this study were presumptuous in that health and human services organizations did not report the utilization of personality and/or behavioral assessment for recruitment, development, or retention of their worker's. The one hundred percent No responses to question one on the questionnaire denoted that the specific demographic surveyed in this study had limited experience, exposure and/or familiarity with the use of personality and/or behavioral assessments. Therefore, no potential advantages of utilizing assessments for recruitment, retention, or evaluation were detected. Those surveyed simply did not render enough familiarity or experience to provide a viable deduction about the organizational benefits gained by utilizing personality assessments.

Recommendations for Further Study

Since state regulatory guidelines exist in Washington State that prohibit or severely limit the use of personality assessments, further studies are needed to determine how businesses and industries are utilizing these assessments as an aid in hiring practices. A duplicate study applying equivalent methodology to a dissimilar demographic population like law firms, retail outlets, or technology companies has the capacity to

render information vital for broad analysis of consistency, contextual application, and diversity of workplace personality and behavioral testing.

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APPENDIX

Personality/Behavioral Assessment Questionnaire For Organizations

INFORMED CONSENT FOR ANONYMOUS SURVEY

THE USE OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT IN HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

You are being invited to participate in a research study because you are a licensed Department of Health and Human Service professional employed in the Pacific Northwest Region of the United States. Your organization provided me with your name and contact information as the person involved with the use of personality assessments. The purpose of this study is to provide HRD trainers and managers with an analysis of information regarding the various uses of personality and/or behavioral assessments administered in human service organizations. Data gathered from this research study will be maintained securely for three years. This study is being conducted by Marianne Ille-McKeague sponsored by faculty member Dr. Anthony Gilberti from the Industrial Technology Education Department at Indiana State University. This study is being conducted as part of a graduate student thesis.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study. There are no costs to you for participating in the study. The information you provide will be used to examine the nature, frequency, and context of usage and administration of personality/behavioral assessments within your organization. Data collected will be used strictly for research and education purposes and be kept anonymous and confidential. Subject/participant names and identifiable information will not be recorded on the survey instrument. Data will be recorded, stored, and secured in database form on researchers computer, and only be accessible by the researcher.

The questionnaire will take approximately five minute to complete. The information collected may not benefit you directly, though this study presents the opportunity to gain knowledge about current frequency of workplace personality testing, the context in which testing occurs, the potential influence that personality testing has on employment and retention in the organization, and the perceived validity and reliability of workplace personality assessment.

This survey is anonymous. I will not record any identifying information on the survey and your name and contact information will be shredded at the conclusion of this call. No one will be able to identify you or your answers, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing and conducting this survey questionnaire via telephone you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact: Marianne Ille-McKeague, 8418 191st Street S.W., Edmonds, WA 98026, (425) 774-1529 m.mckeague@comcast.net or faculty sponsor Dr. Anthony F.

Gilberti, Chairperson and Professor Department of Industrial Technology Education Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809, 1-800-468-5236 or 1-812-237-2642.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN, 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

- 1. Does your organization currently utilize some form of personality and/or behavioral measuring practice?

Yes	No
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If no, skip to question 5

Comments: _____

- 2. If personality assessments are utilized in your organization are they administered for: (Circle all that apply)

Recruitment
Development
Retention
All of the above
None of the above or other please explain

Comments: _____

- 3. If personality tests are currently administered in your organization are they administered by: (Circle all that apply)

In-house staff
Outsourcing firm
Private consultant
Other, please explain

Comments: _____

- 4. How frequently are personality/behavioral assessments administered to potential hires in your organization?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
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Comments: _____

5. What are the challenges that organizations face when using personality tests?

	Reliability of testing		
Strongly Agree,	Agree	Disagree,	Strongly Disagree
	Expense/cost of testing		
Strongly Agree,	Agree	Disagree,	Strongly Disagree
	Tester/evaluator capability		
Strongly Agree,	Agree	Disagree,	Strongly Disagree
	Legal concerns		
Strongly Agree,	Agree	Disagree,	Strongly Disagree

None of the above, please explain

Comments: _____

6. If personality tests are NOT currently administered, would you recommend them to your organization?

Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never

Comments: _____

7. Do you regard personality measuring practices (tests) to be a necessary element in the hiring process?

Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never

Comments: _____

8. Do you regard assessment of workers personalities to be a benefit to an organization?

Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never

Comments: _____

9. Do personality/behavioral tests provide a good measuring tool to help fit a worker to a specific job?

Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never

Comments: _____

10. Would you recommend personality/behavioral assessment of workers to other organizations?
 Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Never

Comments: _____

11. Personality/behavioral assessments should be administered in the workplace for:

Employee/self enrichment
 Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Employment screening
 Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Training and evaluation
 Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

12. Personality/behavioral assessments used during recruitment are indispensable in finding an appropriate employee for a position within an organization?

Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

13. The results of personality/behavioral assessments used during recruitment have a strong relationship to future employee success and performance?

Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____

14. Personality/behavioral assessments can help to identify potential problems in an employee's performance?

Strongly Agree, Agree Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____