

December 2008

Edition 52

PSYCHE

The Newsletter of the
Psychometrics Forum

**WE WISH ALL OUR READERS A
HAPPY CHRISTMAS**



Pianist Playing Greensleeves

Editor's Annual Joke

The Big Five Event

**Dr Hugh McCredie the organizer of
our October meeting, has
contributed the following:**

The October meeting was organized to celebrate the discovery of the Big Five personality factors. These provide the means for users of different psychometrics to communicate with each other and they were the mainspring for the widening of the 16PF Users' Group into the Psychometrics Forum.

I presented the introductory session that tracked the history of personality measurement and showed how the higher order factors derived from two measures that were not based on the Big Five model (16PF5 and OPQ32) related to the classic NEO Big Five factors. With information provided by the test suppliers, I was able to present the following table:

NEO PI-R	16PF5	<i>r</i> NEO	OPQ32	<i>r</i> NEO
Neuroticism	Anxiety	.75	Emotional stability	-.67
Extraversion	Extraversion	.65	Extraversion	.59
Openness	Tough-minded	-.56	Openness	.58
Agreeableness	Independence	-.42	Agreeableness	.64
Conscientiousness	Self-control	.66	Conscientiousness	.68

This shows how, with the exception of 16PF Independence, all of the other 16PF5 and OPQ higher order factors are broadly equivalent with the NEO Big Five. The yardstick for equivalence was the BPS construct validity threshold of r 0.45.

Wendy Lord, Chief Psychologist of Hogrefe, the UK distributors of NEO PI-R, started by explaining the core nature of the Big Five factors as discovered by Lewis Goldberg in 1991 and encapsulated in NEO. She suggested that the core of Extraversion was energy, that of Neuroticism negative emotions, Openness was receptivity to experience, Agreeableness was receptivity to others and the heart of Conscientiousness was strength of purpose and drive. Wendy demonstrated how pairings of the Big Five factors could be combined to indicate behavioural possibilities like style of interacting, approach to tasks, style of learning, style of decision-making and the four Transactional Analysis (TA) life positions. Wendy concluded her presentation by showing how NEO, along with other psychometrics was used to improve the selection of bus drivers.

Anna Brown, Principal Research Statistician of SHL Group, publishers of OPQ led us through an exploration of the uses and limitations of broadband versus narrowband measures of personality. The broadband measures were the Big Five and the narrowband measures were their facets or their constituent primary scales. Anna suggested that we can think of a broad predictor as being like a shotgun – very good chance that at least some of the pellets will hit the target whilst a narrow predictor is like a rifle – fine if you aim it right. She added that where the prime focus is on prediction, there is every reason to align specific trait-composites as predictors of specific aspects of work performance. She instanced how SHL had attempted this by aligning the Big Five factors plus intelligence, power and achievement motivation with the

broad Great Eight managerial competencies but also suggested occasions where it may be best to align narrow personality facets with narrow areas of competence e.g. the narrow trait of perfectionism with the narrow competency of attention to detail.

Anna concluded her presentation by showing how certain Big Five measures were found to predict performance, but that prediction could be further enhanced by also considering the sub-factors/facets of the other broad factors; e.g. whilst Conscientiousness failed to predict performance of electrical goods salespeople, the sub-component Achievement Orientation was a valid predictor.

Anne Herrmann of OPP, publishers of 16PF5 and distributors of MBTI spoke on the use of broad versus narrowband descriptors to predict leadership skills. She suggested that a basic dilemma arises in that the Big Five factors may be too general to account for the complexity of an individual or to predict behaviour, whilst a long list of narrowband scales can be daunting to those not familiar with the instrument. Her suggested solution was to use the Big Five as a framework for discussion and to introduce the component scales under each of the broad factors in turn. She also suggested some more friendly labels for use in discussing the 16PF Big Five:

Extraversion	Relating to others
Anxiety	Management of pressure
Tough mindedness	Thinking style
Independence	Influence and collaboration
Self-control	Structure and flexibility

Anna then reported on a study that found that the narrowband components of hypothesized Big Five factors were, on average, almost 50 per cent more predictive of key leadership competencies ($R\ 0.369$ versus 0.295). She drew her presentation to a close by first asking us to speculate on which MBTI dimensions might associate with each of the 16PF Big Five factors before giving us the results of two correlational studies. We will now be able to add this data into our Big Five comparison table, which was shown in summary form above.

I was the final contributor and reported mixed support, from meta-analyses, for three of the Big Five factors- Extraversion, Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness- as predictive of overall managerial success. In a study of seasoned higher level managers, I found above average levels of all three factors but that only emotional stability was predictive. I suggested that since all of the sample were extraverted, this factor failed to differentiate, although

the crowded nature of the managerial day would be uncongenial to extreme introverted types. I also suggested that a moderate degree of Conscientiousness was ideal since an extreme level could be counter-productive when allied to the fact that the typical manager is not notably sensitive to others but operates in a context where it is necessary to win co-operation.

We look forward to suppliers and users of other psychometrics reporting on the Big Five, as well as the sub-scales of their instruments, and to acquiring further correlations for our comparator table.

Hugh McCredie

The Future Of The Psychometrics Forum

Members who have attended recent meetings will be aware not only of our change of name from the 16PF User Group but also of our development of a web site (at last!) and other changes in our approach to occupational assessment. Our new web site will be launched early in the New Year. It will be known as psychometricsforum.org. This Newsletter will be supplemented with details of the web site and other points relating to February's AGM within the next few weeks.

**Psychometrics And Team
Coaching**

**Ann Rodrigues and
Nicholas Bennett**

**Report on our November
meeting – another
successful event!**

In the morning, Alan Bourne and Richard MacKinnon of Talent Q UK Ltd took us behind their **Dimensions** tool, which was conceived and developed by Roger Holdsworth. Not surprising then the instrument appears marketable, reliable and robust!

The instrument

Launched in 2004 and revised and refined each year, Dimensions was specifically developed to meet researched client needs. It is simple, quick to complete and analyze, using contemporary language and references, but with robust psychometric properties. Purely an on-line tool, it comprises a personality questionnaire and ability tests, which, if they are all taken, will be completed in about 60 minutes with reports generated instantaneously. The instrument combines trait and type profiling, based on 160 personality items, and 360 items for abilities. For a team profile the average numbers are 12 but can be above. The resulting profiles are Trait, Type at Work, Team, Composite Team and Role Fit.

Reports are available in multiple formats, and users of OPQ may not find the trait report too alien! The Type report shows the individual's score rather than placing them in a specific category, and uses Jungian types similar to MBTI.

Application

Dimensions was designed to be used at any of the 5 stages of the Talent Lifecycle identified by Talent Q i.e. Recruitment, Individual Development, Potential, Team Development and Organizational Change (however as each assessment has a 'shelf life' of 24 months, the tests obviously have to be repeated as required). The assessment data can be used in different ways according to the purpose; so for example Dimensions can map individual preferences against 8 team types, which Belbin users will recognize. Graphs are simple to read and in full colour.

Costs

Training - Talent Q currently are offering free conversion workshops for Level B practitioners. There is an annual licensing model for those who prefer it compared to the 'pay as you go' option of full detailed reports. The 'pay as you go' personality report was £25 and £17.50 per ability test, whilst the overall cost for a full report was £75.

Comment

The Dimensions tool appears to have many attractions from the perspective of clients - efficient, simple; for test takers - quick to do, available on line; and of practitioners - robust, considerable amount of technical data, easy to use and to explain.

It appears to take the best from other well-known instruments including OPQ, Myers Briggs and Belbin (Newton's phrase "standing on the shoulders of giants" sprang to mind when Alan and Richard were taking us through the

development of Dimensions and the thinking behind it!)

The presentation was straightforward, comprehensive, and the presenters were not overtly in selling mode, but their information was quite persuasive. Feedback received from attendees was very good: “*very practical - not salesy*”; “*a really interesting tool*”; “*good client insight and very practical and engaging session*”; “*enthusiastic and knowledgeable*”.

The **Dimensions** tool is certainly worth exploring - particularly as the conversion workshops are currently free to some of us.

§§

The afternoon session led by Belinda Smith, - a Director of Waverley Learning and past Chair of The Psychometrics Forum under its previous guise of the 16PF Users Group - was a triumph!

Belinda and her co-presenter Tania Hackett (her client at Pizza Express) took us through a case study of three consecutive teams with whom Waverley Learning had used the Myers Briggs Type Indicator for team building and team coaching - the first being in October 2006. Each team worked within an operational division of Pizza Express. Tania was a member of all three teams, though she occupied a different job role each time.

Working in smaller groups, members of the Psychometrics Forum examined the impact of the team’s differing MBTI profiles particularly on inter-relationships with colleagues and the line manager. Those attending this event very much appreciated Tania’s willingness to share her profile with us throughout the highly interactive and participative session, and hearing about the practical application of the MBTI from the client’s perspective was especially valuable.

We the audience gained a huge amount from this exercise, and in discussions with Tania afterwards, it was gratifying to hear that she also valued the insights generated, which she planned to take back to her colleagues. The session was described as “*excellent and practically grounded*”; “*extremely interesting, relevant and informative*”. So, thank you, Belinda and Tania!

Ann Rodrigues and Nicholas Bennett

There are many ways of trying to assess personality; drawing conclusions from speech, appearance, dress, actions, looking into their eyes, oh, and paper-and-pencil tests. But have you thought of looking at hands?

In a recent edition of the Newsletter I wrote about the analysis of personality through examining the eyes – iridology was the name of the technique and it's been around since the 1800s. I also ended a piece in the September edition with a promise to tell you all about reading personality from the hands. No, it is not palmistry as practiced by some money-grabbing hag at a fairground. Nor is it anything to do with Mystic Meg and her like.



The pictures to the left are reproduced from a book I bought many years ago. If I tell you it was part of a set of 5 volumes called The Library of Factory Management and cost me £1.50 in a second hand shop, you will know that I must have been in my first flush of youth at the time.

I treasure these books. They contain wisdom years in advance of their time, but they were published in 1915!

The legend beneath the original photographs reads: *Judging men by their hands is becoming an art. From the top and to the right the first and third views are the hands of a skilled mechanic, contrasted*

with that of the shop sweeper. The spatulate fingers and the big joints in the fourth view indicate mechanical aptitude as does the 'mechanics hold' in number five, contrasted with number six. Below is the hand of a blacksmith.

Unfortunately the book does not go into detail as to how this was validated – just simple pragmatism I suppose. No mention of coefficients, meta-analysis, test-retest statistics, standard error, T scores or stens. But more seriously, this may give you a false idea of the value of this book. It is littered with little gems of common sense, from which many executives could profit. The following are just a few:

Not only is the manager responsible for content and teamwork but he is also the connecting link between the business and society. Too often his vision becomes ingrown and he has neglected disputes between his company and the public. It goes on to recommend that management undertake an audit of all these factors and then correct their policies and plan ahead.

One section is headed: *Are you paying employees what they are worth and making them worth more?*

In a chapter headed *Hiring And Advancing Workers* the writer asks whether ability to chose good men is an inborn talent or whether it is an ability that can be developed through study and experience. He goes on to say that often the best person for the job is already within the organization. (Just what I've found many times.) He advocates that employers should maintain good contacts with grammar schools and colleges, and that the employer should be able to

determine whether an applicant has the latent characteristics and ability that may enable him to fill a more important position.

When a likely employee is selected, the advice is not to tie them down with contracts and agreements, apprenticeship or otherwise. *The employment relationship is worthwhile only so long as it is mutually satisfactory. When lack of satisfaction is felt on either side, the relationship had better cease.*

Other chapters had headings such as *How To Pick The Best Man; Starting Men Right; and Teaching Men To Do Better Work.* The chapter on Leadership is particularly interesting. (Bet that's whetted your appetite.)

You may well see other quotations from this book in future editions of the Newsletter! It would save me an awful lot of writing. Remember I have five volumes of this stuff. There are many photographs of 'the modern office', the 'model canteen', of senior managers in conference, and even a photograph of Henry Ford at his desk. And no, the book won't be for sale. Unless you pay me in Euros rather than sterling or US dollars.

Editor

Might this be the end of the Introvert Arms?

Only a few months ago, I reported with some excitement, on the arrival of the new landlord at The Introvert Arms. Seasoned readers will know that this pub is the nub of psychometric lore in the next hamlet to me. Indeed people come from far afield to listen gems that drop from the lips of Angus and Hubert, the psychometricians manqué, the aggressive and humble pair respectively, that drink in this pub. Our conversational repertoire extends beyond occupational testing, to things like cryptic crosswords, soduko, knowledge of the periodic tables, chemical formulae, and which of us has the ability to quote large chunks of *War and Peace*. Anyway, I expect you want me to get to the point of all this.

The previous management had been happy for us to pursue these interests to the accompaniment of pints of Pedigree. The new management seemed to allow the same freedoms. But: it seems that they are going to move on, the reason being that they are not making the sort of profits that they were led to expect. (Yes, the previous landlord was a cunning old b****r, no doubt stuffing it all under his mattress rather than putting it through the books.) So it seems that we are not drinking enough. No one has ever accused me of this before. Nor Angus and Hubert. Indeed Angus has drunk so much in the past that he cannot recall any of the Saturday night punch-ups he enjoyed in the slums of Glasgow in his younger days. Hubert can't recall the number of times he has said, "Yes sir, yes sir, three-bags-full" to bosses, clients and everyone else in authority who has touched his life. Both of them have always over-indulged you see. I shouldn't be keeping this sort of company.

Anyway, the ultimatum seems to be “Drink more Pedigree and let’s have a lot less chatter. Otherwise this pub will join the seven or eight that are closing every week. Then you’ll have nowhere to go to talk about your rubbish.”

It’s serious. I’m off to see what I can do about it. I’ll keep you posted.

Editor

EDITOR

David Roberts Tel 01509 852870

david@roberts-productions.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Ann Rodrigues Tel 07947 159848

ann@acer-hr.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

Caro Leitzell Tel 01962 880920

admin@leitzell.com

© 16PF is a registered trademark of the Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc (IPAT).

IPAT is a wholly owned subsidiary of OPP Ltd.