THE COMMITTEE WISHES ALL OUR READERS

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

PSYCHE
The Newsletter of the Psychometrics Forum

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SPORT AND MANAGEMENT:
THERE'S NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!

Both require a level of self-belief, self-efficacy and self-esteem to be successful. Historically, management has often turned to sport for allegories – teamwork, and targets for example. It works the other way as well – branding, being an example - football clubs frequently change their playing shirts to attract new young customers. In the last edition of Psyche, committee member Lynne Hindmarch wrote about self-efficacy. Here, your editor adds a little more.

David Roberts

Lynne Hindmarch's article on self-efficacy was topical, and her choice of topic got me thinking about the subject afresh. At the time of writing, England had just won The Ashes. No, don't groan and look away with such lack of interest. There are lessons there for anyone interested in psychology.

Most of the hype was about Flintoff, Strauss, Broad and Swann. Fine. They deserved it. Much less was said about Jonathan Trott who scored 41

and 119 and for whom this was his Test debut. He must have had a high level of self-belief to score 119 after a fairly average 41. Interestingly, the papers didn't say too much about that. He had a psychological mountain to climb, and he did it.

All this led me to think about a chapter I wrote some years ago in *The Cricket Coach's Guide To Man Management* (Nottingham University Press, 2000).

At the time I was working at Bradford University Management Centre where we were running modules for professional county cricket coaches. I asked each coach to complete a personality questionnaire, the purpose of which was to provide him with an insight into his strengths and areas for development.

The results were fascinating.

Confidence

The collective profile for the group of coaches and would-be coaches showed that as a group they were somewhat lacking in confidence. On a 10-point scale they scored 6, (10 showing extreme apprehension and 1 showing extreme confidence.) They were all well-experienced and had played cricket at first class county level – some even at Test Match level – for many years. How was it that those who could play cricket in front of several thousand spectators, players whose names were well known in the sporting world, some of whom even enjoyed star status, could show anything other than a high level of confidence? Shouldn't they have high self-esteem?

Self Esteem

It is a strange fact that the majority of us develop negative and self-critical attitudes early in life, seldom missing an opportunity to put ourselves down. To do otherwise, to praise ourselves and give ourselves credit, is thought to be conceited and self-satisfied, certainly within our British culture. We do not like those who boast, even if it is justified.

American studies have shown that over 60% of the population have low self-esteem, and this figure includes many people who would generally be classed as successful in the sense that they have good jobs, are intelligent, dress well, etc. Why should this be? Self-esteem is thought to be something of a plastic quality that is largely shaped in childhood, and is reasonably firm around the age of 11 or 12 years old. It can however be improved in later life and managers – not just sports coaches – should be aware of this.

Low self-esteem is thought to be largely a result of how we have interacted with our parents and other authority figures, in which the emphasis is usually on negative statements. "Don't do that," or "You ought to try harder," or "You could have done better than that." Usually, we are so concerned with correcting what be believe to be negative, that we that we forget to comment

on the positive. "Catch people doing something right," said Ken Blanchard in *The One Minute Manager.*

How often have we been in meetings and thought of an idea, but not mentioned it, only to have someone else come up with the idea later – and receive credit for it. Is it the fear of rejection that prevents us from saying something at the right time – the fear of a put-down such as "What makes you think that's such a great idea?" This fear of rejection seems to pervade much of what we say and do. It might prevent us from setting ourselves goals. Why? Because if you don't set them, you can't not achieve them! Sales people might not make that daunting telephone call for fear of rejection. What if they say no? It is this fear of rejection that prevents us having a bolder grip on life.

If a member of staff is criticised he might shrug it off, but if his self-esteem is low – if he has self-doubt – he might take it too much to heart. Let's take a practical example. If a manager calls an obviously intelligent worker stupid, that person may not take the comment seriously, because in his heart, he knows he is not stupid. He may be able to point to diplomas, degrees, or certificates to prove it, if he was so minded. So although he may not relish the comment, he does not let it worry him. His self-esteem is unlikely to be damaged, because he has ample evidence that he is intelligent. If the manager tells him disparagingly that his work is mediocre, and the worker has self-doubt in this regard, then his self-esteem might become even lower. This is likely to impede any improvement in his work.

We need to reverse this pattern. We need to remind ourselves of our successes, which we tend to take for granted, thinking perhaps, that everyone has had similar successes. Managers can encourage their staff to think of the successes they have had, to dwell on the things they do well, instead of concentrating solely on "areas for improvement." Of course the latter *are important*, but not at the expense of blotting out our positive characteristics and abilities. As children we are taught humility. But it is a false humility. If we have a talent it can be stated simply as a matter of fact. It is no different than saying that we are five feet ten inches tall and have blue eyes. We should remind ourselves regularly of our attributes, and managers should encourage staff to do this.

Self-Efficacy

I said earlier that many cricketers had low or average levels of confidence in spite of their obvious success on the field. Why should this be so? The answer to this question has received much attention from sports psychologists in recent years. What the personality profile showed was confidence as a global personality trait. In other words it described the amount of confidence that players might show in their normal everyday lives. Sports psychologists (notably Albert Bandura, cited by Lynne Hindmarch in September's *Pyche*) have identified a particular aspect of self-confidence known as self-efficacy and it is the strength of *this* factor that indicates the degree of confidence that the sportsman might have in succeeding at a

specific task. It is essentially a cognitive process. It is a subjective judgement, reflecting what the person *believes* he can do. It does not necessarily relate to what he *can* do. A manager may have a high degree of self-efficacy although his performance does not warrant it. He might be very capable, but if his self-efficacy is low, he is less likely to perform well. Usually however, self-efficacy and skill are at about the same level. This is due to one key influence – *his past performances.*

If confidence and self-efficacy are essential parts of success in business life, it is even more important in sport. Self-efficacy is relevant to teams as well as individuals. Listen to Morris and Summers, two eminent Australian sports psychologists, quoting an example of an England V Australia Test Match in 1993:

Australia certainly had a better-balanced team and it was probably more skilful, man for man, but the stranglehold that permitted Australia to turn around the few difficult situations they met, illustrates the difference in confidence between the teams. When they found themselves under pressure, Australia did not think about defeat and they pulled things around, while England did not believe they could win, so they let their chances slip.

A well-known sports coach told me:
"I've seen some of the best players in the world when they're lacking in confidence. It doesn't matter how great a player you are, even the best lose confidence after several failures."

Let us relate this concept of self-efficacy to coaching – which currently occupies many of our members. What can the coach do to improve performance? (Some of the following was included, or implied, in Lynne's September article.)

First, look at the actual previous performance of the manager. This should be the most powerful indicator of future performance. ("Why look into the crystal ball when you can read the book?" said a former politician.) For the same reason, a previous failure may encourage someone to think negatively about an approaching task. ("I failed last time. I'll probably fail this time.") Other factors are also relevant. What about the difficulty of the task? If a manager has succeeded in a difficult assignment, his self-efficacy will be higher than if the task were easier. Did he succeed on his own or was it a team effort? If it was on his own, his self-efficacy will be higher. Performance targets need to be challenging yet attainable, otherwise there may be little increase in self-efficacy.

Second, the successful performance of another manager can heighten self-efficacy. If two managers have roughly the same skills, and our man performs better it is likely to have the effect of raising self-efficacy. "If he can do it, I can do it," might be an appropriate comment. This is known as vicarious experience.

Third, the coach may well tell the manager that he can succeed at a particular task but this will only succeed when the coach is recognised as

being honest as well as knowledgeable and competent in the eyes of the manager, and when such encouragement is given sparingly.

Finally, and a further aspect of Bandura's theory, is that of repeated success through participatory modelling. You can see how your boss behaves (if he is your role model!) and you can try to emulate his approach to tasks. The theory is that with repeated success the manager's level of self-efficacy will rise.

Always try to work for someone that's smarter than you are.

David Roberts

'Psyche' Readership Survey

As readers of our last edition will remember we are currently at a transitional point in the history of 'Psyche', with David Roberts in the process of stepping aside after 15 glorious years as your editor. Unthinkable I hear you cry...

At the last meeting of the Psychometrics Forum committee in October someone in the room suggested that now would be a good time for us to survey the membership for ideas on how our membership might like to see 'Psyche' evolve in the coming months and years.

As befits our technology savvy times you will shortly be receiving a very brief on-line survey inviting your participation. 10 short items are all that it will contain – scarcely enough to produce a reliable personality scale in old money.

TPF committee members at our next meeting in February will review comments that we receive. As befits a voluntary committee we are not promising that we will be able to act on all feedback received. However, we will do what we can.

A short summary of responses will also be in the March edition of Psyche.

Many thanks in anticipation of your enthusiastic participation.

Adrian Starkey
Editor in waiting

Psychometrics and Coaching
Hugh McCredie reports on our
October meeting

It is always a pleasure to have Roy Childs address our meetings. Invariably, he has something new to say and he is in a league of his own in engaging his audience. The memory of Roy having participants on his FIRO course actually *experience* Inclusion/ Exclusion etc. remains vivid more than 16 years after the event.

Early in his session at our October meeting, Roy had us write pen portraits of ourselves. He suggested that neither these portraits, nor the profiles emerging from typical personality questionnaires, are as fixed, or 'frozen', as some would have us believe. This would be good news for coaches, as the coaching process is focussed on development; be it skill, behaviour or something more fundamental.

Throughout his session Roy emphasised the situational aspects of both behaviour and personality. The situational case for behaviour seems patently obvious and I have direct personal experience of such an effect in the case of personality. A few years ago, I was privileged to attend a one day conversion workshop, conducted by Roy, for Team Focus's Type Dynamics Indicator. This was the first such psychometric which I had completed since I had chosen self-employment 7 years before. To my surprise, I emerged clearly on the introverted side of the introvert/extravert divide, although not to an extreme degree. Previously, whilst in corporate HR, I had invariably registered on the extravert side, although less so than my line management colleagues.

When I had digested this result, I realised how happy I was as a marginal introvert now working primarily on my own. I also recalled the frequent occasions of discomfort that I had experienced in the highly extraverted world of management. I reasoned that my earlier marginally extraverted scores were likely to have been the fruit of, unconscious, situational bias deriving from the managerial context in which I had been working.

So, I can accept Roy's assertion of a contextual bias in answering personality questionnaires. However, I have some difficulty with the implication of his remarks, during questions and answers, that there is no personality score that cannot be engineered around (or somehow accommodated) in an occupational role, potentially by coaching. I posed the question in an earlier article 'Do managers need to be extraverted?' I concluded that a clear (lower quartile) extravert was unlikely to be comfortable in a truly managerial role and that in such cases there was a strong risk of the job holder avoiding (or even evading) over-stimulation from the environment or, alternatively, suffering long-term burn-out.

In short, whilst I think that coaching can help candidates from a broad range of personality scores around the ideal for a role, there will be situations when it might be best not to select such candidates. Alternatively, if such candidates are appointed and subsequently struggle to perform, it might serve them best if they were helped to relocate to roles more suited to their personalities. An anonymous source put the issue rather stronger that I would have chosen, 'You can probably train turkeys to climb trees, but it might be better to select squirrels'!   *Hugh McCredie*

Hugh's new book, *Selecting and developing better managers*, explores the impact of personality on behaviour, competencies and job performance. It is to be published shortly by Lulu.com and will be available on-line from Amazon and Borders.

The Psychometrics Forum on LinkedIn Groups

Some members will be aware that in order to get our message out to a wider potential group we have recently initiated a LinkedIn Psychometrics Forum Group. This is proving to be an excellent way for us to keep in touch and to promote the work of the forum. LinkedIn is essentially a business networking group with several million members worldwide. I am sure that many full members of The Psychometrics Forum will already be signed up to LinkedIn as part of normal business networking in the 21st Century. Those of you who are not, but would like to it is easy (and free) to set up a profile at www.linkedin.com.

As this final copy goes to press on the 18th December our LinkedIn Group has been active for just over one month and we now have 294 'members' from around the world. Most are based in the UK, and include some of the major figures in the industry. A quick look at the geographical spread of our current LinkedIn group membership makes exciting reading:

Australia – Brazil – Canada – China – Germany – India – Ireland – Jordan – Malaysia – Netherlands – Norway – Peru – Romania – Singapore - South Africa – Spain – Sweden –Switzerland - Trinidad & Tobago - United Arab Emirates - USA (nearly 20 members)

Some of you who are already LinkedIn users may have seen how we used LinkedIn to promote the recent New Frontiers in Psychometrics meeting in December and the forthcoming Hogan and Kaiser event on 13th January. A straw poll undertaken at the December meeting indicated that a significant proportion of those present had become aware of the event directly through our LinkedIn presence.

The Psychometrics Forum LinkedIn Group remains separate from Full Forum Membership and LinkedIn subscribers do not enjoy preferential seminar rates. However, we hope that a growing LinkedIn following will drive both seminar attendance and full membership numbers.

If you are not already a member of the LinkedIn Forum group you are warmly welcomed to sign up. In addition, once you are signed up you are invited to spread the word with fellow professionals through the 'Share Group' feature.

LinkedIn Forum membership is an excellent way to communicate with a rapidly growing number of like-minded professionals.

Adrian Starkey
Co-Editor

New Frontiers in Psychometrics

The first of what we hope will become an annual event took place in early December. This report focuses on the psychometric aspects of the four constituent sessions and how they relate to the Big Five model of personality, which is the common ground of our readership.

Situational Judgement Tests (SJT)

Wendy Lord of Hogrefe contrasted Situational Judgement Tests with self report questionnaires. She suggested that whilst the latter reflect underlying traits and typical or preferred behavioural styles, SJTs reflect the capacity to judge the most appropriate style for particular realistic job situations. The most appropriate style may be that agreed by experts but for Hogrefe's Leadership Judgement Indicator (LJI) it is the one out of four (Directive, Consultative, Delegative or Consensual) predicated for the situation by The Vroom-Yetton Decision Model[1].

Basically, the LJI yields a score for accuracy of judgement against the Vroom-Yetton model and also the respondent's preference for each style. For overall judgement, Wendy reported small effect correlations with numerical and verbal critical thinking tests and moderate effects with two BPI[2] scales: Flexibility and Leadership Motivation. Each of the latter map substantially onto both NEO Big Five Extraversion and Neuroticism (negative correlation). High accuracy of judgement scores were characteristic of senior managers.

Personality and Leadership

Professor Dave Bartram of SHL suggested that the charismatic style of leadership espoused by many had proved too narrow a model to cope with recessionary conditions. In essence, leaders need to direct attention to achieving results as well as keeping employees happy. Dave redefined the terms transformational and transactional leadership as focussing, respectively, on the processes of organisational change and achievement of organisational effectiveness. Moderated by the Great 8 competencies, the following personal characteristics (OPQ Big Five factors, motives and g) associate with the two types of leadership as follows:

Transformational	*Transactional*
Openness	g
Need for Control	Extraversion
Emotional stability	Agreeableness
Need to Achieve	Conscientiousness

Using years of survival in management as an index of success, Dave reported that the two motivational drives were the strongest predictors of success in transformational leadership with greater Openness in third place. For transactional leadership lower Agreeableness and lower Conscientiousness scores characterised the survivors. Of the remaining factors, Extraversion differentiated managers from non-managers, g was generally high and the Emotional Stability was constant across the entire sample.

Implicit Association Tests (IAT)

Pete Jones, author of the *Implicity* IAT, explained that the basis of such measures is the fact that the response time for a faked answer is longer than that for a true one. The reason for this is that false responses involve more mental processes than does true answers. Consequently, a person's true position can be inferred, via an ingenious calculus, by measuring the response time for the various items in the test. IATs have been facilitated by the highly accurate recorded response times for computer-administered tests.

IATs have been most successful in detecting implicit prejudices, with implicit bias levels against disabled, black and gay/lesbian people emerging almost double those revealed by explicit measures. It occurs to me, that the theory underpinning IATs could be harnessed to combat faking in conventional personality measures when administered on-line. The Big Five factor most prone to faking is Anxiety/ Neuroticism, which is heavily associated with management derailment.

Telling and Asking

My contribution involved the reworking of old data to explore relationships between interactive behaviours and the Big Five personality factors. I found significant correlations between the two *Telling* behaviours:

- PROPOSING: Putting forward a new suggestion or course of action.
- GIVING INFORMATION: Offering facts, opinions or clarification to other people.

and the reverse pole of the 16PF4 Big Five equivalent of Agreeableness, and also correlations between Openness and the two *Asking* behaviours:

- TESTING UNDERSTANDING: Questioning to ensure that another person's earlier contribution has been understood
- SEEKING INFORMATION: Seeking facts, opinions, or clarification from another person.

Conclusions

The day's proceedings suggested the following insights regarding the Big Five factors:

Extraversion	• May contribute to accurate situational judgement
	• Differentiated managers from non-managers
Anxiety	• Low scores may contribute to accurate situational judgement
	• May be more accurately assessed by implicit measures
Openness	• May contribute to effective transformational leadership
	• Associated with *Asking* style of relating to others
Low Agreeableness	• May contribute to effective transactional leadership
	• Associated with *Telling* style of relating to others
Lower	• May contribute to effective transactional leadership

Conscientiousness

My own research[3] suggests the reason why Extraversion may fail to differentiate performance *between* managers is that a high level is a threshold requirement for entry into the management population.

References:

1. Vroom, VH and Yetton, PW (1973) *Leadership and decision-making*, Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press
2. Hossiep, R and Paschen, M (2008) *BIP-Business-focussed inventory of personality*, Oxford: Hogrefe
3. McCredie, H (In press) *Selecting and developing better managers*, Lulu.com

Hugh McCredie

Pauline is a HPC Registered Practitioner Occupational Psychologist and a BPS Chartered Psychologist. She is a Past Chair of the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology and also co-founder/joint MD of the web-based Coaching and Mentoring Network.

Pauline set the scene by describing the effect of the current economic climate on coaching, and the CIPD reports that organisations are increasingly moving to deliver coaching and related developmental services 'in house', resulting in increasing competition amongst coaching providers for external coaching contracts. In a wide-ranging talk, touching on the foundations of psychology and the history of coaching, she made specific reference to the 1969 address by George Miller, the President of the American Psychological Society, in which he asked psychologists to 'give psychology away' by sharing its findings with the general public so they could apply it to their daily lives.

Psychologists picked up this idea, leading to the 1970s interest in personal development and the appearance in the marketplace of popular psychological products such as Transactional Analysis and NLP. The subsequent growth during the 1980s in personal development and one-to-one help and support led to the birth of coaching as a distinct profession.

Pauline touched on the influence of the humanistic tradition on coaching values, and explored 'Theory of Mind' (the ability in humans to generate theories about what other people are thinking and feeling) as the basis of effective coaching and emotional intelligence. Linked to this, she described 'psychological mindedness' – a belief in the benefits of discussing one's problems, accessing feelings, being open to change, and interested in the meaning and motivation of one's own and others' behaviour.

Lynne Hindmarch

These psychological theories and beliefs could be described as underpinning the core coaching competencies, and are shared with other professional groups who work with people in the 'helping' professions, from psychologists and psychotherapists to doctors and ministers. The core coaching and mentoring competencies (as identified by the EMCC) include skills in professional practice, listening and communication, working effectively with attitudes and behaviours, belief in the potential for growth and development, focus on positive outcomes and self-awareness. This list does not include specific skills in the use of psychological models, methods and practices, which the EMCC describe as advanced or specialist competencies.

In reviewing whether the role of psychology is helpful or harmful in coaching, Pauline identified the following:

Helpful:
- A source of sound theoretical underpinnings for all core coaching practices
- The beneficial transfer of psychological theory and research to everyday situations
- Increased awareness of the role of psychological ideas and theories in coaching practice
- Collaboration between coaches and psychologists to deliver a mix of services to clients when appropriate.

Harmful:
- Psychological theory may be misunderstood and therefore misapplied
- Competition between coaching and psychology as distinct domains, leading to fragmented or duplicated research efforts
- Negative competition between coaches and psychologists
- Psychological services in effect being offered as coaching (because of the perceived difference in fees)

Moving on to discuss assessment methods, Pauline suggested that organisations like to use standardised psychometric tests because they are reliable, valid and cost-effective. Some coaches take the view that psychometrics have no place in coaching, because they are used by 'experts' to make diagnoses or judgements about people. They perceive that assessment is 'done to' rather than 'done with'. However, most established psychometrics are being adapted for coaching practitioners, and coaches themselves are developing others. Pauline emphasised the specialist skills needed in test design and construction, and the expectation in organisations that psychometric tests are statistically robust.

In summarising whether the role of psychometrics in coaching is helpful or harmful, Pauline made the following points:

Helpful:
- The use of well-designed psychometrics can support exploration of factors such as personality and critical thinking skills which is beneficial to the coaching process
- The advantages of the use of psychometrics at the right time by a practitioner who understands the benefits and limitations of the assessments they are using.

Harmful
- The use of home-grown psychometrics where reliability or validity is unknown
- The use of a single toolkit for all clients and circumstances without considering the wider impact or limitations of the tool used.

The nature of the Forum audience suggests that we are largely pre-disposed to using psychology and psychometric assessments with our clients. Pauline presented us with a balanced view of the advantages and disadvantages of their use in coaching.

Lynne Hindmarch