Edition 74
Summer 2015

Psyche

The newsletter of The Psychometrics Forum

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Contents

A word from your editor

Adrian Starkey

Adrian Starkey

In this bumper edition of ***Psyche*** you will find a wide variety of articles on practical psychometric topics. We have two cautionary articles for practitioners, one from Paul Barrett and the second from Max Blumberg. Both are very different in terms of approach and subject matter, but both raise thought provoking questions. Max is promising a companion piece for a subsequent edition and I sincerely hope that we have not heard the last from Paul on the pages of ***Psyche***.

Also in this edition we have a full account of the proceedings from our March 11th Personality & Politics event. The results of the UK election may have come as something of a surprise for many, but hopefully those readers who attended our event will find the reviews from the three contributors to be in line with exit interviews held on the day! Many thanks to our speakers Professor Adrian Furnham, Dr.Rainer Kurz & Dr.Hugh McCredie and their associated reviewers Nicholas Bennett, Anna Barlow & Trish Guthrie. From the reviews it is clear that some rich and varied content was discussed on the hustings.

Psyche 74 also contains Hugh McCredie's 7th and final installment from his series 'Heroes, landmarks and blind alleys in personality assessment'. This time we join Hugh investigating the pursuit of happiness. Followers of Hugh will be encouraged to learn that we may be able to look forward to a companion series on the historical development of ability assessment – watch this space in 2016….

Continuing in the theme of positive psychology, first time ***Psyche*** contributor Rona Rowe introduces us to the Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF). TIFF provides a measure of social behavior and how we focus our energy, drawing inspiration from the pioneering field of Transactional Analysis and the work of Eric Berne.

In our final piece I am grateful to Rosemarie Potts for providing a review of the recent MBTI training event held by OPP. As many of you will be aware, over the past couple of years full members of TPF have had the opportunity to attend a number of discounted training programs delivered by test publishers. This is something that we are committed to continuing as an ongoing benefit of TPF membership. Details of the 2016 program can be found on the 'News and Events' page of our website.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the recent publication of 'What More Can I Say?' written by former ***Psyche*** Editor David Roberts. This is a collection of stories, memoir, travel and articles taking the reader through a varied journey in what David describes as his 'uneventful life.'

The Amazon link is:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/0957372183

More detail on David's literary profile can be found at:

http://www.transculturalwriting.com/Grassroutes/content/David_Roberts.htm

Copy deadlines

Autumn – Monday 31st August 2015

Winter – Monday 30th November 2015

Spring – Monday 29th February 2016

To book a place on forthcoming TPF events, please contact our Administrator Caro Leitzell on 01962 880920 or email her at admin@psychometricsforum.org

Details of membership are available on the Forum website: www.psychometricsforum.org

The utility of psychometric tests for small organisations

Paul Barrett

Chief Research Scientist – Cognadev

Paul Barrett

Consider the evidence bases/validity coefficients for personality, EQ/EI, and other variants of psychometric tests presented in test manuals, academic articles, presentations at conferences; virtually all are drawn from large corporate organizations, government departments, the police and armed forces. For employee selection scenarios at smaller-size organizations, 'validity generalization' is invoked so as to assure these particular clients that even they can benefit from psychometric testing of prospective candidates. But can they really? The issue here is whether the expected positive benefit indicated by a validity coefficient computed over large numbers of cases within one or more corporates is at all noticeable by a smaller organization who may be employing fewer than 20 new employees each year.

What I want to look at is the likely real-world consequence of using psychometric tests for a small organization, in terms of whether any such organization would ever notice the claimed performance consequences which are meant to be accruing from the use of such tests.

For this exercise, in order to gain a clearer picture of the utility (or otherwise) of using psychometric tests in small organizations, I will need to model what will happen for thousands of such employers using a percentile cut-score on a test to screen-out or screen-in candidates.

Although it is possible to factor-in realistic constraints on sampling such as:

- how many people are actually available as serious potential 'candidates' for a job,
- what happens to that 'candidate availability' over time as more and more organizations seek to select from that subset while job-turnover puts some candidates back into the market,
- the variations in candidate 'quality' in terms of 'prospective job performance',
- whether discrete or composite 'profile' cut-scores are used, or just a single 'primary' scale,
- how test scores are used; for example, as the basis of subjective narrative-report interpretations,

- test-score and performance-outcome distributions not being 'normal', but rather skewed-beta or Pareto.

These constraints require more complex modelling that is beyond the focus of the current article.

The current modeling constraints and parameters

- Test validities are varied between 0.2, .03, and 0.4.
- Interview and other kinds of selection process validity is assumed to be a fixed constant at 0.2.
- Interview and other selection methods validity adds [0.1] to each level of test validity (because it is reasonable to assume that there will be some overlap between a test score and what can be judged about a person's test score from a variety of other information about a candidate).
- Number of employees to be selected: 5 or 10.
- Both test scores and performance are assumed to be normally distributed with sample values for both attributes are expressed as integers.
- Test scores are generated for a typical 15-item attribute scale, with Likert response range between 0 and 4 per item, giving a measurement range between 0 and 60, in integers.
- The mean population test-score is [38], with standard deviation of [7].
- Test cut-scores (select-in *at* or *above*): 30th [=34], 50th [=38] and 70th [=42] percentiles.
- Performance-outcome 'ratings' vary between 0 and 100, with the mean 'population' rating as [60], and standard deviation of [10].
- Candidates are grouped into five predicted performance groups based upon their performance rating:
    - 'Poor' [*below* 25th percentile = 53].
    - 'Below-Average' [*at or above* the 25th and *below* the 40th percentiles = 53, 57]
    - 'Average' [*at or above* the 40th and *at or below* the 60th percentiles = 57, 62]
    - 'Above-Average' [*above* the 60th and *at or below* the 75th percentile = 62, 67], and
    - 'Excellent' [*above* the 75th percentile = 67].
- 5,000 organization-samples of new employees are randomly drawn from the appropriate bivariate distribution for each of the 27 possible conditions (3x test validities x 3x cut-scores x 3x numbers of selected employees).
- A 'contrast' condition for each psychometric test-score validity condition is reported for a sample drawn with no prior knowledge of psychological test scores. This condition represents candidate selection using existing methods other than psychometric testing, with an implicit validity of 0.2.
- Each empirical bivariate data distribution consists of 100,000 cases of data (*rounded integers*) sampled randomly from the parameter-specific bivariate normal distributions.

The sampling sequence

1. Randomly select 5, 10, or 20 'new employees' from an empirical bivariate distribution with specified validity, where each candidate's test score meets or exceeds the specific test cut-score threshold. Do this 5,000 times, tallying the numbers of 'selected' employees classified within each performance group.
2. Express the numbers in each group as a percentage of the total employees selected. E.g. for selecting 5 employees, the total number selected is 25,000. For selecting 10 employees. The total number selected is 50,000.
3. Contrast these summary results with those generated from sampling within the 'contrast' bivariate distribution where cases are sampled entirely at random from the entire applicant distribution.

Model 1: Test score validity 0.2 and projected employee job-performance group-classification; three test cut-score thresholds.

Figure 1: Selection rates for Model 1

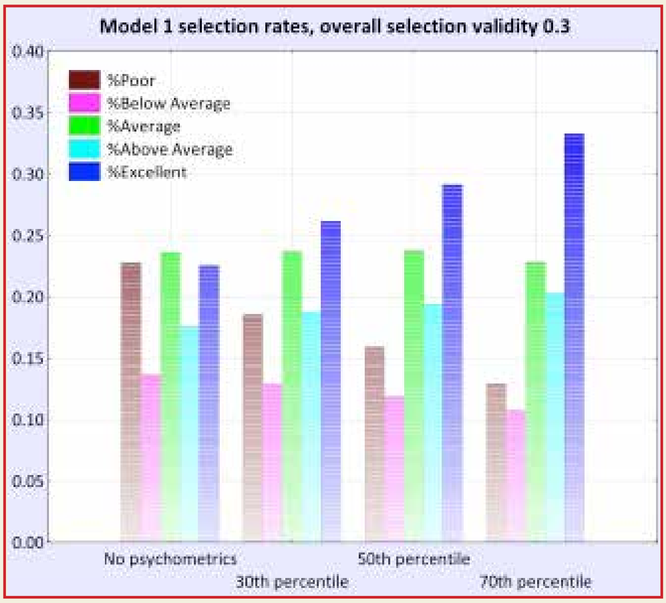
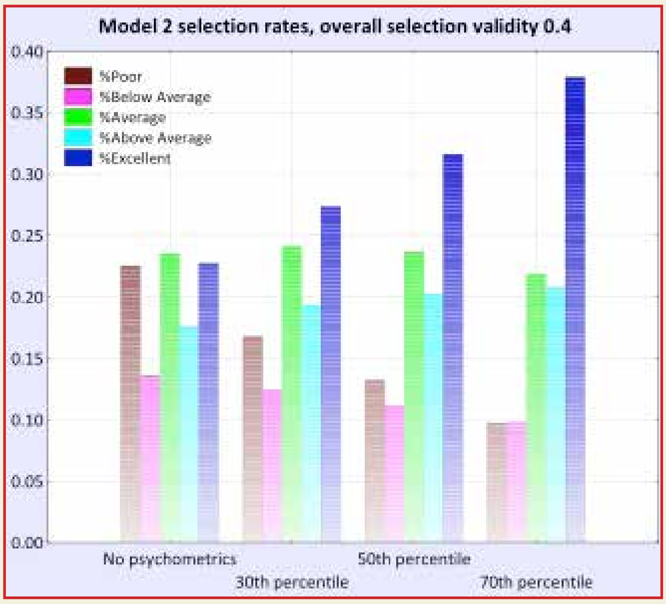


Figure 1 shows the average selection-rates across the five predicted job-performance groups, for a test score validity of 0.2, with a 0.1 lift in validity due to additional non-psychometric selection procedures (an overall selection validity of 0.3). Three test cut-scores are utilized: at or above the 30th, 50th, and 70th score percentile. The contrast group labelled ‘no psychometrics’ represents selection using an employer’s totality of existing selection processes, assumed to possess a validity of 0.2.

Model 2: Test score validity 0.3 and projected employee job-performance group-classification; three test cut-score thresholds.

Figure 2 shows the average selection-rates across the five predicted job-performance groups, for a test score validity of 0.3, with a 0.1 lift in validity due to additional non-psychometric selection procedures (an overall selection validity of 0.4). Three test cut-scores are utilized: at or above the 30th, 50th, and 70th score percentile. The contrast group labelled “no psychometrics” represents selection using an employer’s totality of existing selection processes, assumed to possess a validity of 0.2.

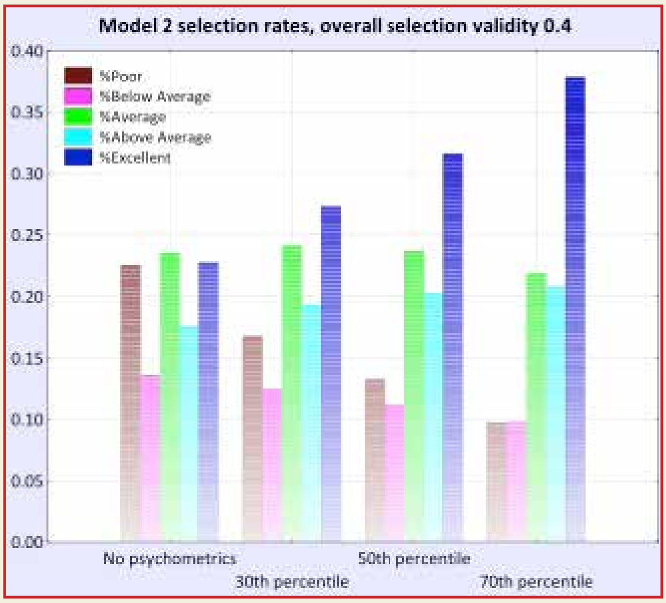
Figure 2: Selection rates for Model 2



Model 3: Test score validity 0.4 and projected employee job-performance group-classification; three test cut-score thresholds.

Figure 3 shows the average selection-rates across the five predicted job-performance groups, for a test score validity of 0.4, with a 0.1 lift in validity due to additional non-psychometric selection procedures (an overall selection validity of 0.5). Three test cut-scores are utilized: at or above the 30th, 50th, and 70th score percentile. The contrast group labelled ‘no psychometrics’ represents selection using an employer’s totality of existing selection processes, assumed to possess a validity of 0.2.

Figure 3: Selection rates for Model 3



Although the graphs show clear trends in terms of rates of expected job-performance category employees, what’s important here is seeing the actual numbers of employees selected given these rates, where only a few employees might be selected and employed over a year. Tables 1-3 show the numbers of selected new employees across two predicted performance groups: Below-Average and Average-&-Above, using the selection rates in figures 1-3, contrasted with the ‘no psychometrics’ selection group.

Table 1: Expected numbers of new employees across job-performance categories (5 selected)

Selection Rule	0.3 overall selection validity		0.4 overall selection validity		0.5 overall selection validity	
	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above
*No psychometrics	2	3	2	3	2	3
At or above 30th percentile	2	3	1	4	1	4
At or above 50th percentile	1	4	1	4	1	4
At or above 70th percentile	1	4	1	4	1	4

* The No psychometrics condition has a validity of 0.2 overall.

Table 2: Expected numbers of new employees across job-performance categories for Model 1 (10 selected)

Selection Rule	0.3 overall selection validity		0.4 overall selection validity		0.5 overall selection validity	
	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above
*No psychometrics	4	6	4	6	4	6
At or above 30th percentile	3	7	3	7	3	7
At or above 50th percentile	3	7	2	8	2	8
At or above 70th percentile	2	8	2	8	1	9

* The No psychometrics condition has a validity of 0.2 overall.

Table 3: Expected numbers of new employees across job-performance categories (20 selected)

Selection Rule	0.3 overall selection validity		0.4 overall selection validity		0.5 overall selection validity	
	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above	Below average	Average & above
*No psychometrics	7	13	7	13	7	13
At or above 30th percentile	6	14	6	14	5	15
At or above 50th percentile	6	14	5	15	4	16
At or above 70th percentile	5	15	4	16	3	17

* The No psychometrics condition has a validity of 0.2 overall.

What might we conclude?

- Using a selection test with a validity of 0.2 looks to be of marginal impact unless you select above a substantive percentile (at least above the 50th percentile). The likelihood is that if screening candidates using a lower percentile, few employers would notice any 'stand-out' difference at all in the quality of employees they hired using a psychometric test as an initial candidate screen.
- Using a selection test with a validity of 0.3 is of lesser utility unless you select at or above the 50th percentile). But still there really doesn't look to be the kind of 'stand out effect' that would make psychometric testing an obvious addition to an already implemented selection process.
- Using a selection test with a validity of 0.4 looks more noticeable in its effects, although again it's not until you increase the cut-score percentile that the benefits really accrue. But this is beginning to look like a 'will make a substantive difference' result.
- Overall, from this very constrained analysis, I think it would be fair to conclude that for a small organization wanting to improve its employee selection using screening psychometrics, it should use tests with job-performance validity coefficients of at least 0.3, with screening cut-scores at or above the 50th percentile.

Important Caveats

- Although the figures in table 1 look better for any selection above the 30th percentile and test validity > 0.2, bear in mind these data are rounded integers. For example, the actual average value for Below-Average, at or above the 30th percentile is 1.46 (rounded to 1). But this is getting a bit too numerically picky given the host of simplifying assumptions outlined in the preamble of the modelling.
- It's easy for me to make recommendations about using more discriminating cut-scores, but the reality is that this strategy only works where sufficient candidates apply for a position who might exceed that cut-score threshold. What may happen is that by selecting a very discriminating cut-score, the employer sees no candidates at all. But the dilemma then arises that by adopting a less-discriminating cut-score, the impact of the psychometric screening will be also be diminished.
- This modelling assumed linear relations between the psychometric test-scores and job performance. Yet we know that for attributes like Conscientiousness, non-linearity is more evident than not (Le et al, 2011, Lam et al, 2014, Carter et al, 2015). So, simply using the results from this computational investigation may prove unwise when it comes to selecting candidates on those attributes shown to demonstrate curvilinear relationships with job-performance outcomes.
- What's also missing from this analysis is the cost-benefit analysis which factors in the cost of using psychometrics. But with many organizations offering instant 'have credit card – can test' options for screening-style assessments, such costs will likely be trivial. However, whether any of these 'instant' assessments possess validity coefficients of any veracity is a moot point. Without those validities, a client is forced to take a 'punt', which as this modelling shows, may result in no added advantage to how they currently select their new employees.

In conclusion

This was just a simple 'back of a matchbox' look at seeing whether a small organization might benefit at all from using screening psychometrics in its selection processes. Given the assumptions stated at the outset of the article, and the caveats at the end, I think a small organization might obtain significant 'noticeable' financial benefit if it uses psychometric tests which possess evidence of at least moderate validity (0.3 and above) and a discriminating cut-score. The modelling used here could be greatly refined, adopting the realistic usage and candidate-market-behaviour effects similar in approach to those used by Sturman's (2000) powerful investigation into the realistic vs advertised benefits of conventional utility analysis (i.e. after several real-world adjustments, the modelling showed a 96% reduction of the standard utility-formula projected 'saving'). And such 'intervention-effect' modelling need not be confined to the potential deployment of psychometric tests, but also to the deployment of expensive leadership and employee development interventions in large corporates, where costs may be in substantive and outcome expectations are based upon 'plausible reasoning' claims by providers rather than substantive empirical evidence-bases.

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Personality & politics: reviews of our 11th March event

Nicholas Bennett

Psychology, ideology and politics

Professor Adrian Furnham
Reviewed by Nicholas Bennett

Adrian Furnham, Professor of Psychology at University College, London (UCL) spoke during the morning session. He started by looking at what he referred to as the bottom line. In the relationship between Personality and Politics he argued that much depends on the measure of politics: such as beliefs/ideology; behaviour like voting, taking part in protests and, knowledge. He argued that all the main personality factors are involved, but that they account for relatively little variance. Other individual difference factors also play a part like 'the Dark Triad' and intelligence.

He discussed the **Authoritarian Personality**. Theodor Adorno et al (1950) described a fascist-prone individual as militaristic, conventional and anti-hedonistic, submissive to higher authority and punitive toward those below. A harsh upbringing was held to cause repressed hostility to the parents, emerging as ethnic prejudice and cruelty towards weaker persons. Typical authoritarian personality traits were listed and examples he gave included:

1. **Conventionalism**: rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values. 'Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.'
2. **Authoritarian aggression**: a tendency to condemn anyone who violates conventional norms. 'A person who has bad manners, habits and breeding can hardly expect to get along with decent people.'

Coming from UCL it did not surprise me to hear Adrian refer to Hans Eysenck's original Two Factor Theory of Stable/Unstable and Introverted/Extraverted (before Neuroticism was added). Using factor analysis, Eysenck

(1954) found two independent dimensions of ideology (Radicalism and Tough-mindedness). Communists and Fascists were shown to share aggressive/dogmatic tendencies. A much debated idea!

Adrian then moved on in history to talk about **Constitutional Ideology** quoting Wilson (1973) who presented evidence that social and political attitudes were organised around a constellation called conservatism (vs liberalism). Both conservatism and tolerance of ambiguity were theorised to be inborn personality traits, where conservatism clearly reflected fear of uncertainty/ intolerance of ambiguity. The C-Scale used a 'catch-phrase' format to tap immediate emotional reactions to familiar issues like the death penalty, evolution, fluoridation, immigration and abortion.

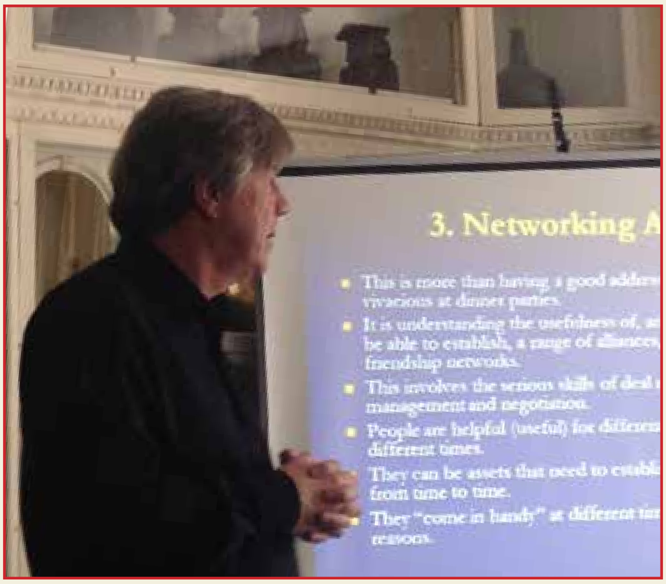
A Furnham & Cheng (2015) study showed correlations between variables such as Political Interest, Gender, having voted in the last General Election and personality traits. This was presented as a very interesting chart. Another useful chart cluster was on the topic of World Leaders and their illnesses. These detailed and lengthy charts showed well-known political leaders and the published data on their illnesses related to hubris (overwhelming pride). Copies of the whole presentation have been circulated to attendees.

Adrian then moved on to the world of **Office Politics**. What can we learn from the researchers who have very cleverly 'repackaged' office politics into office savvy? He asked us what came to mind when we hear the words 'organisational politics'? Some answers included Backstabbing, Brown-nosing, Bootlicking, Style over substance, Manipulative, Hidden Agendas, Old boy networks, Deals under the table, Turf struggles and Testosterone overload!

Adrian showed us his **Conceptual Model of Political Skill** which included:

- Leader Political Skill
- Subordinate Perceptions of Organisational Support
- Subordinate Organisational Cynicism
- Subordinate Organisational Commitment

Key factors here included **Social Astuteness** – This is about being perceptive, insightful, attuned to all the vagaries and nuances of everyday interactions. It is about being psychologically minded, i.e. picking up the clues and cues, reading between the lines; the subtexts, seeing the meaning in things and finally being aware of self and others: how you are 'coming across'; what others are really saying.



Adrian Furnham

The next factor was **Interpersonal Influence** – This is about being persuasive in different contexts. It incorporates being adaptable and flexible, bi-or tri-lingual in the languages of persuasion (visual, vocal, verbal – an interesting viewpoint I thought) and about monitoring self and others sufficiently to be able to charm, cajole and persuade. Finally, it's knowing about and practicing the influencing principles such as using reciprocity norms, emphasising similarity, etc.

Another factor was **Networking Ability** – This is more than having a good address book or being vivacious at dinner parties. It is involves understanding the usefulness of (and more importantly to be able to establish) a range of alliances, coalitions and friendship networks. This involves the serious skills of deal making, conflict management and negotiation. People are helpful (useful) for different reasons and at different times. They can be assets that need to be established and then 'tapped' from time to time. They 'come in handy' at different times and for different reasons.

The final slide showed us '**Apparent' Sincerity**' – Ah yes he said that great oxymoron. It is about being able to look authentic and genuine on all occasions irrespective of what you really think or feel. Call it emotional labour or good acting, it is the ability not to show coerciveness, manipulation, or that one has ulterior motives. So what you see is not what you get. Thus sincerity is showmanship: it's good acting and really understanding emotions.

Overall I found Adrian's presentation informative, well documented with research and fun.

Anna Barlow

Politics and the psychology of abuse and cover up

Dr. Rainer Kurz – Cubiks Group Ltd

Reviewed by Anna Barlow
Senior Consultant, Psysoft Ltd

If the title of this presentation didn't capture attention, the enthusiasm and passion from Rainer Kurz certainly did. This fascinating presentation asked important and poignant questions such as "how cover ups such as the Jimmy Savile case are possible?"

Rainer provided a comparison of the use of psychometrics within the workplace, which is highly visible and guided by best practice, with the use of psychometrics within clinical and forensic settings where potentially life-altering decisions are made in comparative secrecy.

By presenting research mapping personality factors to competency frameworks Rainer illustrated how the underpinning competencies for many jobs share great similarities and that it is the nuances and language used that vary. This was highlighted through discussion of the fascinating work of Silvester (2012), describing the recruitment process for politician candidates and mapping of conservative and liberal democrat competencies. For two parties who appear to have different values and contrasting opinions, the similarities of the requirements for MP candidates were remarkably similar.

The presentation went on to reflect upon the use of profiles claiming to assess 'derailment traits' leading to 'labelling' and using terms that begin to encroach on clinical territory, without the full understanding of their descriptions. Rainer prefers the terminology of 'overextension risks' which mandates judicious exploration of actual behaviours in the light of environmental pressures and opportunities.

Rainer illustrated the importance of proper use of psychometric assessments for forensic and clinical settings through a case study of a lady who had her child taken away on the basis of a psychometric assessment. She had experienced early trauma as a child resulting in somatoform dissociation. The results of occupational tools did not identity anything as being particularly problematic. However, results on the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory questionnaire, a very widely used clinical personality test, appeared to signal problematic 'traits'. Rainer pointed out that the disturbing logic of this test seems to be that anyone who is not depressed or anxious MUST be narcissistic. For example, positively phrased questions on the narcissistic scale seem to indicate narcissism, while negatively scored questions indicate absence of depression. Occupational assessments are used to identify strengths, include tentative phrasing and are typically interpreted with an appreciation of the influence of contextual factors and the error of measurement. However, Rainer pointed out that the computer-based test interpretation (CBTI) reporting for the MCMI clinical personality test tends to be populated with language that focuses on finding weaknesses. Despite being designed for development purposes this tool is being used to guide critical decisions in forensic settings, where the consequences of over-interpretation can be profound.

Rainer's conclusion was that manipulative people 'play the system' and that too often psychologists either do not see through the scheming, or for a variety of reasons are too afraid to confront dangerous abusers. As a consequence victims and witnesses of offences end up being persecuted within family courts due to misinterpretation and over-reliance on the results of poorly constructed and interpreted assessments. Rainer illustrated this with the statistic that 10,000 children a year are put into forced adoption, often due to vague 'psychological issues' that their parents ostensibly have.

Rainer went on to discuss the impact of false memories. It was argued that because of the media, financing and the denial culture it had become very difficult for people to come forward to discuss abuse. As a consequence there has historically been a reluctance to report, investigate and prosecute cases. The culture is now changing with abuse reports being taken more seriously and investigations taking place.

Rainer suggested that to help avoid scandals like the Jimmy Savile case all test users need to be 'switched on' and to adhere to agreed professional guidelines around testing. He also argued that the 'discourse of disbelieve' culture, that makes it so difficult for abuse to be identified and discussed, should be dismantled.

This thought provoking presentation really highlighted the need to reflect on test use and the interpretation of results derived from assessments.

The great and the good? Personalities of CEO's, US Presidents and UK Politicians

Dr. Hugh McCredie
Reviewed by Trish Guthrie

Trish Guthrie

Hugh's presentation rounded off The Psychometrics Forum March event on 'Personality and Politics'. It was a thought provoking and timely reminder on how personalities of CEO's, US Presidents, UK Parliamentary Candidates and Local Councillors matter, either to the teams they are leading, to the selection committees, or how they conduct themselves in the job. Hugh packed a lot of information into a short space of time, outlining the process and results of six studies looking at leadership personality (references given at the end). All tables shown here are reproductions of Hugh's presentation slides.

1. CEO Personality and its effect on team dynamics and business performance

Randall S Petersen (London Business School) and his colleagues, hypothesised and tested the effects of leader personality on the group dynamics of Top Management Teams (TMTs) and of TMT dynamics on organisational performance. The personality of the CEO is likely to be reflected in the selection of TMTs and their interaction with each other and their boss. The sample used (see below) were 17 US Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from 9 organisations, during good and bad times of corporate performance.

The Sample

Business	Associated with Good Times	Bad Times
CBS News	Salant	Sauter
Chrysler	Iacocca	
Coca-Cola	Goizueta	Austin
Disney	Eisner	Miller
General Motors	Smith, J	Smith, R
IBM	Cary	Akers
Kodak	Fisher	Whitmore
R J Reynolds (tobacco)	Sticht	Johnson, F R
Xerox	Kearns	McColough

The study focused on CEO personality variables as captured by the five-factor model. The California Adult Q-Set (CAQ; Block, 1978) was used as the measure to compute Big Five Scores for the CEO's, using information derived from archival sources, such as published biographies and interviews. Top Management Team Dynamics were measured by the Organisational Group Dynamics q – sort (GDQ – Petersen, Owens & Martorana, 1999b) again using archival sources (memoirs and books written by financial reporters). Corporate performance was measured by published accounts at the time, looking at income growth. The researchers were able to correlate CEO personality to team dynamics. As Petersen et al say, 'it is one thing to know that personality characteristics are an important determinant of leadership effectiveness, it is quite another to know how (through what processes) personality has an impact on effectiveness.' If CEO characteristics do permeate down through their management teams and impact organisational income growth, results showed that CEO's were invariably extravert, with a tendency to low Agreeableness, but emotionally stable. A co-operative approach by the leader is more likely to have teams working together, sharing information and generating team solutions. Low Agreeableness often promotes a competitive environment, with strong individuals. Paul Austin CEO of Coca Cola (1966–1980), who had the lowest individual score, is a good example of this. 'Austin's low agreeableness contributed to the harsh treatment of his TMT, the creation of a culture of fear and ultimately poor financial performance'.

CEO average percentiles

Dimension		CEOs N=17
E	Extraversion	82nd
A	Agreeableness	22nd
C	Conscientiousness	51st
N	Neuroticism	27th
O	Openness	38th

As an interesting comparison Hugh was able to show us the percentiles of UK management candidates and UK SME Directors, from his and Dave Bartram's research. Showing similar extraversion, low agreeableness, but higher openness.

CEO average percentiles compared to UK management candidates and SME Directors

Dimension		CEOs N=17	UK Management Candidates[1] N = 1796	UK SME Directors[2] N = 445
E	Extraversion	82nd	86th	86th
A	Agreeableness	22nd	11th	11th
C	Conscientiousness	51st	73rd	73rd
N	Neuroticism	27th	12th	12th
O	Openness	38th	54th	54th

[1]Bartram (1992) 16PF Form A; [2]McCredie (2010) 16PF Form A (corrected for faking)

Hugh referenced Jim Collins (Good to Great, 2001) who identifies Humility as being a key attribute for successful leaders and Open to Feedback being a part of that. For Top Management Team correlations, the researchers identified CEO personality team dynamic dimensions as follows:

CEO	Team Dynamics Dimensions
E	Leader strength or dominance
A	Cohesiveness; legalism; decentralization
C	Legalism; control
N	Leader weakness; rigidity
O	Risk-taking; flexibility

Using the Organizational Group Dynamics Q-sort, 100 group functioning items were rated on a nine-point scale with inter-rater reliability averaging *r.* 0.77. The items were mapped onto 8 dimensions and CEO characteristics were firstly correlated with the TMT dynamic dimensions and then top management team dynamics and income growth (corporate performance).

TMT dimensions-Corporate Performance

CEO*	TMT dynamic dimension	Performance correlates
N – O	Rigidity - Flexibility	0.48**
C-	Sense of Control – Crisis	ns
	Optimism-Pessimism	-0.53**
E,N-	Leader Weakness-Strength	ns
A,N-	Factionalism-Cohesiveness	0.45**
C-,A-	Legalism-Corruption	ns
A-	Decentralization-Centralization	ns
O	Risk Aversion-Risk Taking	0.44**

*A negative sign indicates an association with the left hand TMT description

Results from independent observations of chief executive officer (CEO) personality and TMT dynamics for 17 CEOs, supported the authors' hypothesised relationships both between CEO personality and TMT group dynamics and between TMT dynamics and organizational performance. The conclusion being that extraverted, emotionally stable CEOs with moderate scores for agreeableness and openness are more likely to build optimistic, flexible, cohesive teams who are prepared to take calculated risks and generate higher corporate income growth.

2. Personality of US Presidents

A study of 41 US presidents from Washington (1789–1797) to BushSnr (1989–1993) looked at 115 authors of biographies written after 1960 (to increase likelihood that 'biographers would still be living and physically and mentally up to providing ratings'.) The number of raters per president ranged from 1 to 13 with a mean number of 4.2.

The authors 'report findings pertaining to the average profile of chief executives on the NEO PI-R' (Costa, P.T. Jr., & McCrae, R (1992). They take two of the 'most illustrious' presidents Washington and Lincoln and look at their profiles in more depth. 'The project and findings are discussed in terms of the use of the NEO PI-R in psycho-historical research and assessment.' Asking the question "Who has the personality to be president?" (p. 403).

NEO PI-R: US President average percentiles

Dimension		Presidents	CEOs
E	Extraversion	70th	82nd
A	Agreeableness	25th	22nd
C	Conscientiousness	73rd	51st
N	Neuroticism	55th	27th
O	Openness	32nd	38th

Then taken to Facet level:

Dimension	Percentile	Facet	Percentile
E	70th	Assertiveness	79th
A	25th	Straightforwardness Modesty	18th 31st
C	73rd	Achievement	88th
N	55th		
O	32nd	Feelings Values	69th 14th

In comparing the two historical Presidents, George Washington (1789-1797) and Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) results can be shown as:

Dimension	GW Percentile	AL Percentile
E	27th	76th
A	16th	76th
C	99th	76th
N	38th	82nd
O	14th	94th

GW=George Washington AL=Abraham Lincoln

'Washington embodies the traditional virtues of duty, responsibility, self-discipline, leadership and courage. He falls quite short of the modern political commodities of warmth, empathy and open-mindedness.' 'Lincoln's highest score is on Depression….consistent with the well-reported fact that he occasionally suffered periods of deep despair.' As a summary it was found that 'presidents tend to be hard working and achievement-minded, willing and able to speak up for their interests and value the emotional side of their life.' More extrovert, less open to experience and less agreeable than typical Americans, but greater achievement striving, assertiveness and openness to feelings. The researchers found that the "Big Five personality dimensions and their facets, as measured by the NEO PI-R are useful in the prediction of presidential greatness" (p. 417). As Hugh pointed out, the study had some limitations in terms of the observer rated source material, which could be seen as rather tenuous.

3. UK Parliamentary Candidates

At the time of Hugh's presentation, the election was a couple of months away, so assessment and selection of UK Parliamentary Candidates was very topical. According to Jo Sylvester and Christina Dykes (2007) - there had been 'surprisingly little consideration of how the selection of political candidates compares with employee selection or whether individual differences predict electoral success.' Their study described the process of design and validation of an assessment centre for parliamentary candidates for the Conservative party, running up to the May 2005 election. Key competencies required by a Member of Parliament (MP) and selection criteria for a standardised assessment, were identified by conducting a job analysis. Two key criteria were identified during this analysis 1) effective communication and 2) critical thinking skills. MPs must be able to sift through large amounts of information quickly, formulate an argument, balance conflicting demands and come up with an answer. The writers postulated that candidates showing higher levels of critical thinking skills were more likely to be successful in their selection.

In summary the numbers attending the assessment centre, N = 415 and those selected for the 2005 election, N = 106. There were no significant differences on performance between male and female candidates. The Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal scores correlated moderately with:

- Assessment centre OARs *r*.32
- Percentage swing achieved in constituency results *r*.45

The authors concluded that these findings were important as they provided the first empirical evidence that individual differences can impact on electoral success.

However, Hugh raised the issue that the selectors for MPs had the Assessment Centre scores. Candidates were likely to be ranked from the Assessment Centre and then selectors picked the brightest, more credible candidates.

4. Local UK Councillors – Personality in Politics and Political Performance

This study used several methods to look at whether it is possible '(1) to determine whether politicians share a latent mental model of performance in political roles and (2) to test hypothesized relationships between politician self-rated characteristics (i.e., extroversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, Machiavellianism, and political skill) and received performance ratings from political colleagues and officers… Participants were politicians and employed officers in local authorities throughout England and Wales'. The measures were: Personality: NEO Personality Inventory – Revised (NEO PI-R: Costa & McCrae, 2006). Political skill the 18-item Political Skill Inventory (PSI: Ferris et al., 2005) was used and for Machiavellianism: the 20-item Mach-iv self-report questionnaire (Christie & Geis, 1970). Factor analysis was carried out on the 'self- and received performance ratings', this identified 'five latent factors': Resilience (RS), Politicking, Analytical Skills (AS), Representing People, and Relating to Others. Regression analyses found that neuroticism and conscientiousness contribute to received ratings of RS, and neuroticism contributes to received ratings of AS.' However, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Openness did not correlate.

NEO PI-R: UK Local Councillors

Dimension	Percentile	Competency	*r**
E	54th		
A	38th		
C	21st	Resilience Analytical Skill	.40 .21
N	73rd	Resilience Analytical Skill	-.34 -.30
O	46th		

*Based on colleague rating: N=98

As Hugh said there is a certain amount of 'So What?' and the conclusion given was that we might get better representation if party candidates were selected who are more conscientious and less neurotic than their colleagues and preferably average against the population at large.

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Trish Guthrie Consulting
trishguthrie@aol.com

Heroes, landmarks and blind alleys in personality assessment

7. Personality, feelings and the pursuit of happiness

Dr. Hugh McCredie – TPF Vice Chair

Dr. Hugh McCredie

The subscript of this series is the emergence and celebration of the Big Five personality factors. Originally, there was no intention to include much of the content of this article. What changed the situation was the BBC2 *Horizon* programme entitled 'The truth about personality'. Contrary to expectations, this programme effectively ignored the Big Five and defined personality in terms of optimism and pessimism, exploring how the balance of the two was linked to happiness and how optimism could be raised by exercises that could change the architecture of the brain.

It was decided to explore (1) links between the Big Five and measures of 'feeling', particularly any which included optimism/pessimism, (2) whether there are relations between any of these constructs and happiness and (3) whether there is scope for engendering improvements and, finally, (4) are there any heroes, landmarks or blind alleys to be found? The investigation began in earnest shortly after the author had completed reading McCrae & Costa (2005) which concluded that, effectively, the Big Five trait scores were *constant* over the average adult lifespan.

An early 'feelings' measure

The feelings domain is more technically labelled 'affect'. One of the earliest cited measures of affect, and happiness, is the *Scale of Psychological Wellbeing* (Bradburn, 1969). The measure is comprised of two, purportedly independent, constituents: Positive affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA).

Positive Affect questions *Did you feel...*	*Negative Affect questions* *Did you feel...*
... particularly excited or interested in something?	... so restless that you couldn't sit long in a chair?
... proud because someone complimented you?	... very lonely or remote from other people?
... pleased about having accomplished something?	... bored?
... on top of the world?	... depressed or very unhappy?
... that things were going your way?	... upset because someone criticized you?

The scale asks participants if they have felt certain emotions as follows:

The number of affirmative NA answers is deducted from the affirmative PA answers to give the affect difference, or 'Affect Balance Score' (ABS). The latter was claimed to be a measure of happiness. Asking these questions about short intervals (e.g. last week) tapped *state* affect whilst using a question such as 'Do you *usually* feel...' elicited dispositional or trait affect.

Personality, affect and wellbeing: A landmark study

Costa & McCrae (1980) reported correlations ranging from .40 and .64 between ABS scores and independent measures of subjective wellbeing, including *r* .60 with a measure of pessimism (Beck et al. 1974). Additionally, after relating Bradburn's scales to Cattell's (1970) and Eysenck's (1964) measures of extraversion and neuroticism they hypothesised (p. 673) 'Extraversion…predisposes individuals towards positive affect, whereas neuroticism…predisposes individuals toward negative affect'.

The hypothesis was supported and they concluded:

> *Extraverted traits contribute to one's positive enjoyment or satisfaction with life, although they do not generally appear to reduce the unpleasantness of adverse circumstances. Neurotic traits predispose one to suffer more acutely from one's misfortunes, but they do not necessarily diminish one's joy or pleasure. (Costa & McCrae, 1980, p. 674)*

So, already, we have established clear links between neuroticism, NA and pessimism and between extraversion and PA. Correlations were small to moderate: N to NA *r* .39; E to PA *r* .23 and even smaller for short term (state) affect scores.

Exploring the nature of affect

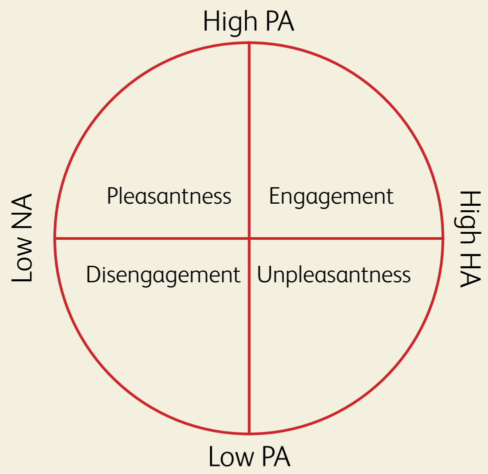
Watson & Tellegen (1985) investigated the underlying structure of PA and NA by factoring published analyses of 'transient self-reported affect' using 20 or more mood terms so as to 'provide an adequate representation of the mood space'. This excluded Bradburn's measure on account of its brevity. They reported:

> *we have encountered the same two large, bipolar dimensions: Positive Affect and Negative Affect… accounting for about one half to three quarters of the common variance (Watson & Tellegen, 1985, p. 220).*

They represented their findings as the circumplex shown in Figure 1

Figure 1: Simplified Affect Circumplex

(after Watson & Tellegen, 1985, p. 221)



They commented:

> *High Positive Affect is in each case represented by a broad range of pleasurable and typically highly engaged or aroused mood states, whereas low Positive Affect is marked in many solutions by words reflecting melancholy... All of the Negative Affect factors have a variety of negative high-arousal mood states loading on the high pole and terms reflecting placid disengagement (e.g., calm, relaxed, at ease) as markers of low Negative Affect. (Watson & Tellegen, 1985, p. 225)*

In a contemporaneous paper, Tellegen (1985) suggested that the four quadrants represent *state* affects, whilst the vertical and horizontal axes PA and NA are the *trait* affects which are associated with personality traits E and N respectively. It is also possible to infer the association of high engagement with Gray's impulsivity and unpleasantness with anxiety (see Article 5).

The PANAS Scales

Watson, Clark, & Tellegen (1988) reported the development and validation of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) in response to the questionable reliability and validity of earlier measures, notably Bradburn (1969). They arrived at 10 descriptors for each of the affects. Those for PA were *attentive, interested, alert, excited, enthusiastic, inspired, proud, determined,* *strong and active* and those for NA were *distressed, upset, hostile, irritable, scared, afraid, ashamed, guilty, nervous, jittery*. The authors concluded:

> *these 10-item scales are internally consistent and have excellent convergent and discriminant correlations with lengthier measures of the underlying mood factors…When used with short-term instructions (e.g., right now or today), they are sensitive to fluctuations in mood, whereas they exhibit trait-like stability when longer-term instructions are used …The scales correlate at predicted levels with measures of related constructs and show the same pattern of relations with external variables that have been seen in other studies. (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988, p.1069)*

Crawford & Henry (2004) established UK norms for PANAS and evaluated its properties. They concluded that the measure 'has been shown to possess adequate psychometric properties in a large sample drawn from the general adult population' (p. 262).

The structural convergence of affect and personality

Before PANAS came into use, Meyer & Shack (1989) observed that:

- PA and NA were the recurrent orthogonal (independent) dimensions accounting for most common mood variance and relating to 'a variety of daily activities and health complaints' (p.692) and that whose quadrants related to Galen's temperament types. (see Article 1)
- Personality research has drawn frequent parallels between E and PA and N and NA and that E and N also delineate the four temperaments.

They analysed EPQ-R (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985) personality responses alongside both state and trait ratings from a mood questionnaire, based on Watson and Tellegen (1985). They found 'that the dominant two-dimensional model of mood (PA and NA) and the dominant two-dimensional model of personality (E and N) share the same structural basis (p. 700). They reported that 'the average correlation of E with trait PA was .69, and the average correlation of N with trait NA was .55)…the average correlation between E and state PA was .51, and the average correlation between N and state NA was .38'. (p.702).

Incidentally, Meyer & Shack replicated a circumplex, published by Eysenck & Eysenck (1985), which placed optimism very close to E and pessimism, more or less, equidistant from Unstable (N) and Introverted (low E)

Is it just about E and N?

McCrae& Costa (1991) correlated all NEO Big Five factors (Costa &McCrae, (1985) with Bradburn's (1969) affect measure and a number of wellbeing indicators. They concluded:

> *N leads to more negative affect and less wellbeing; E leads to more positive affect and more wellbeing; O leads to more of both positive and negative affect, with no net effect on well-being; and both A and C lead to more positive and less negative affect and thus higher levels of well-being…there is much more evidence for the role of N and E in well-being than for A and C, but there are both theoretical and empirical grounds for the inclusion of measures of all five factors of personality in studies on personality and emotion… providing opportunities for the expression of agreeableness and conscientiousness may…to increase well-being. McCrae& Costa (1991, p. 231)*

The truth about personality

We have located optimism as an important facet of PA/E and pessimism at the intersect of NA/N and low E. We have also seen happiness as the product of PA scores exceeding NA scores. We have not yet investigated reported interventions to increase optimism and their impact on the architecture of the brain. The main contributor to this aspect of the *Horizon* broadcast was the British neuropsychologist Elaine Fox. In her associated best-seller, she asserted:

> *Pessimists show substantially less activity in the left half of their brains, whilst optimists show much more activity in the left half relative to the right half of their brains. (Fox, 2013, p. 45)*

In the programme, and in the book, Fox revealed how two interventions, Cognitive Bias Modification (CBM) and Mindfulness training could reverse the ratio of hemispherical brain activity. These are early days, and, so far, we are dealing with relatively short-term effects related to specific, if important, facets of the Big Five model.

Heroes, landmarks or blind alleys?

This article has added to the established heroic reputations of Costa and McCrae and reported on some useful work by Watson, Clark and Tellegen in producing a definitive measure of affect. With regard to our search for new heroes, landmarks or blind alleys, the work of neuropsychologists, like Elaine Fox, has undoubted potential for one or other of these labels but we must await developments. Making people happier would be a truly landmark achievement.

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Workforce analytics: who's fooling who?

Max Blumberg
Founder, Blumberg Partnership Ltd
Research Fellow, University of London

Max Blumberg

I'm going to argue here that many organisations using HR analytics to improve their people programmes are fooling themselves. Let me explain: evidence-based HR analytics relies on a model something like this:

HR programme --> Competencies --> Employee performance --> Org performance

That is, you invest in workforce programmes to increase employee competencies ("the how"), which in turn delivers increased employee and organisational performance ("the what").

The role of HR analytics is to calculate whether your HR programmes do in fact raise employee competencies and performance. If the analytics show that your programmes are not improving performance, they provide guidelines on how to fine-tune them so that they do.

Faulty competency and performance management frameworks

Over the past 15 years, I've asked many conference and workshop audiences the following questions about their performance management and competency frameworks:

Performance management: To what extent do you believe in your organisation's performance ratings as measured say by your annual performance review? Do they objectively reflect your real behaviour, and are they a fair unbiased basis for your next promotion and salary increase (as opposed to your manager promoting whoever they feel like promoting)?

Competency management: To what extent do you believe that your organisation's competency framework accurately captures the competencies required for high employee performance in your organisation?

The vast majority of audiences tell me that they believe in neither their competency nor performance management frameworks because, for example:

Competency frameworks: In most cases, the competency framework was brought in from outside and not created by managers who understand the real competencies required for high performance in their particular organisational culture. Thus their managers don't believe in their competency framework and use it as a tick-box exercise. Furthermore, since the framework covers multiple job families, it is unlikely to predict performance across different job families e.g. is it really likely that salespeople and accountants require the same competencies for high performance? Research shows that these lists should contain very different competencies; yet most organisations use a "one size fits all" possibly with minor adjustments.

Performance management: Performance ratings are ultimately the subjective view of an all too human line manager. What chance then do employees have of an unbiased performance rating? Furthermore, many organisations use forced performance distributions meaning that only so many people can be high performers. Who can blame high performers for not believing in their performance management system or their chances of promotion when the forced distribution says "sorry but the top bucket is already full"?

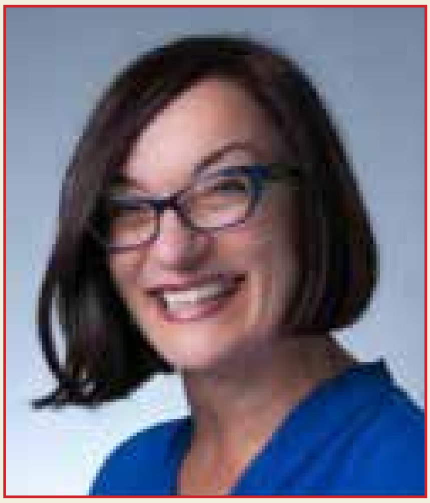
So here's the problem: if like most people you don't believe in your organisation's competency and performance management frameworks, then you certainly aren't in a position to believe in the results of statistical analysis based on data generated by these frameworks. As the old acronym GIGO says, Garbage In, Garbage Out.

What are some possible solutions?

1. Stop doing HR analytics until you've fixed your frameworks. You're wasting valuable resources on analysis based on data you don't even believe in (and putting the data into an expensive database does not make the data any more valid).
2. Your need to design your own competency frameworks - one for each focal role. When I say "you", I mean that this needs to be done by your line managers (if you want them to believe in it) and facilitated by you as HR e.g. using repertory grids
3. If you accept that managers are human and that any performance ratings will therefore always be subjective, find ways to minimise the impact of subjectivity by using multiple raters/rankers.

TIFF – the 'actometric' in a psychometric world!

Rona Rowe



Rona Rowe

The **Temple Index of Functional Fluency (TIFF©)** is a personal development tool for measuring human social behaviour and how we focus our energy. It is based on the internationally acclaimed, award winning model of social behaviour, Functional Fluency. The ideas were developed by Susannah Temple PhD over the last twenty years and grew out of her educational and therapeutic work using the Transactional Analysis theory of ego states first postulated by Eric Berne in the 1960s and expanded by others in the field since then.

The Functional Fluency model offers a cognitive map for understanding human social behaviour and a menu for promoting the human capacity for choosing what to do or say next.

The TIFF tool sits firmly at the positive psychology end of the psychometric spectrum. One end represents the measurement of so-called stable psychological types and/or traits through various profiling tools. At the other end are the metrics that assume we are always responding and changing in relation to the environment and our experience, as a consequence any measurement must of necessity be of the moment.
TIFF takes its place at the latter end of the spectrum.

The TIFF questionnaire is completed online by the client. The results are presented graphically and numerically and shared with the client – the process being mediated face to face by a TIFF practitioner even if the interface involves technology. The numbers only mean something in relation to each other, in the patterns that emerge and in relation to whether these patterns are based, for instance, on 'good day' or 'bad day' experiences. TIFF is transparent and realistic about the power and the limitations of questionnaire results, giving the client the capacity to make sense of them and put them to use.

The feedback is based on an objective showing to the client the Functional Fluency model and what it is about, followed by the subjective exploration of the client's profiles which are a snapshot of their behavioural patterns and tendencies. The feedback focus is to identify and reinforce behaviour patterns that seem effective, in order to expand them; and to realise which behaviours may be counterproductive and work out how to transform them.

The TIFF practitioner may have some hypotheses about what the data mean, but only by checking them out with the client can we begin to understand the real significances of the behaviours in an individual's life. So the feedback sessions are carefully considered. The process involves several phases: the contracting, the explanation of the Functional Fluency model; and the joint exploration and making sense of the profiles. The TIFF practitioner's role is to create the conditions that allow the client to explore the information and its significance – to notice, question and future-focus the information so it is useful to the client in realising their aspirations. This feedback coaching session is an integral and important part of the TIFF process – the outcomes are often unexpected and revelatory. Clients usually leave hopeful and focussed and many talk about the discipline and benefit of identifying their interpersonal strengths. The experience is developmental, enabling the turning of insights into behavioural change.

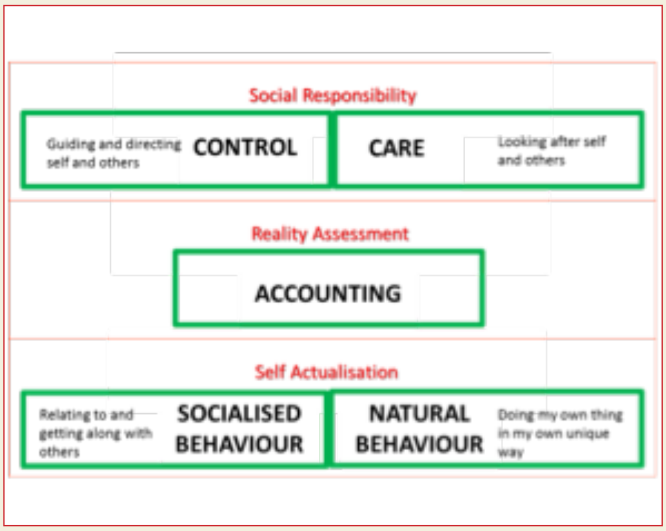
TIFF profiles can be part of longer term coaching relationships. TIFF can also produce group profiles to provide a foundation for workshops that can enable team members to increase a mutual understanding that helps in turn to develop mutual respect and empathy. The team benefits from the growing trust and cooperation engendered by the process.

In comparison with other psychometrics, TIFF's focus on behaviour and on the shared expertise of client and practitioner creates a shift in perspective from trying to capture something stable, knowable and unchanging to the idea of a provisional reality which is continuously open to influence and change. The TIFF experience minimises the possibility of magical thinking, because the client is NOT left with a pack of information telling them who they are, which category they fit into and what this means by the psychological expert they have access to. There is no invisible 'deus ex machina' waiting in the wings to dispense wisdom and explain everything as if there is one perspective which is more 'right' than all the others. With TIFF, the power to take or leave what is useful here-and-now remains in the hands of the client.

The Functional Fluency model is conceived at three levels:

Level 1 Functional Fluency suggests there are three fundamental ways all humans direct their energy. These **three value-free Categories** are: self actualisation, reality assessment and social responsibility. All are in the cause of species survival.

Level 2 The three categories are divided into **five value-free Elements** – care, control, accounting, socialised self behaviour and natural self behaviour. They are the WHAT that all human beings do.



Level 3 [*see overleaf*] At level 3, having asked the question, "HOW do we do these elements?" values are added. The five elements are subdivided into **nine Modes of Behaviour** thus: **four Negative Modes** and **five Positive Modes**.

These modes of behaviour are the ones measured by the profiling questionnaire. There are two main focuses for the analysis:

a. The **balance** of scores which indicate flexibility. How easily does an individual move their energy between the three main categories and modes according to need?
b. The **ratios** which indicate levels of effectiveness. How much time does the individual spend

Social Responsibility	
DOMINATING -ve control	MARSHMALLOWING -ve care
STRUCTURING +ve control	NURTURING +ve care
Reality Assessment	
ACCOUNTING +ve	
Self Actualisation	
+ve socialised CO-OPERATIVE	+ve natural SPONTANEOUS
-ve socialised COMPLIANT/RESISTANT	-ve natural IMMATURE

demonstrating behaviour in the positive modes relative to the negative ones?

For those of us learning professionals who see our work as helping people to help themselves – a huge part of which is giving individuals *permission to think for themselves* – TIFF fits our frame of reference. It is structurally and dynamically designed to take account of individual difference and can only be usefully used collaboratively.

It also embeds the idea of the individual in roles of social responsibility and places greater emphasis than other models on relating to others. Functional Fluency and TIFF are about interpersonal effectiveness and how to increase it. There is self, there is here-and-now accounting and there is self in relation to others. All of these perspectives are key to a human's ability to survive and thrive. The focus on the social versus individual aspects of being human is one of the current concerns of neuro-psychology and new research has led to changes in how we conceive of successful decision-making, effective leadership and organisational culture. TIFF fits firmly within this current zeitgeist. We aren't only thinkers. We are all feelers and doers and ignoring these aspects in psychometrics is no longer viable in the current state of neuro-scientific knowledge. Hence the coining of "actometric" to define the nature of TIFF.

The model suggests that Functional Fluency is the ability to blend the energies of the positive modes as required in any given situation to allow the best outcome possible in the circumstances. So it is about developing flexibility, breaking out of old habits of behaviours that don't always work, and identifying new choices that allow individuals to respond rather than react to situations and people. It is about developing the capacity to change. As one of my clients succinctly commented, '*I didn't know I had a choice. Now I do.*' It allows individuals to identify how they can save energy, reduce stress and create a new story – professionally and personally.

'Clients learn how to expand and enrich what they already do well. This focus is on the positive because research show that this is the best way to fire up energy for change and development.' (S Temple, www.functionalfluency.com). So TIFF is primarily a developmental tool – an "actometric", pragmatic and optimistic and firmly grounded in the human capacity to survive and continually find new ways to thrive.

If you would like to know more, please visit the Fluent Self website at www.functionalfluency.com

Rona Rowe MA is an independent learning consultant based in Oxfordshire. She is a coach, facilitator and trainer and recently licenced TIFF practitioner. Transactional Analysis provides the philosophical and theoretical underpinning for her work. She is currently preparing for qualification as a Certified Transactional Analyst.

MBTI training review

Rosemarie Potts

Having brushed with MBTI in the past I was sceptical as to how a type model could in any way be as good as traits. I also, mistakenly, thought that a conversion course would be a breeze. So to say that I was astonished that there was a pre-course module, the workshop module, a post-course module and an exam is an understatement. However I am very glad that the course was so thorough, as I do now feel that I have a sound understanding of the tool. Not only that, but I can see how useful it can be in a range of contexts.

To really understand Jung's model it was important for me to dump everything that I had ever learned about trait models (although only temporarily). This was necessary because whilst in terms of expressed behaviours one can see how models cross over, the premises of trait and type are very different. I particularly liked the dynamic underpinnings of the model – we know we change with age, but in terms of activities such as coaching, career guidance and outplacement activity MBTI delivers a very important piece of the picture that provides individuals with both choice (best-fit) and insight.

Our primary facilitator, Leanne was excellent – her wealth of knowledge was astounding and, given the nature of the group that she was training, very necessary. More particularly the range of exercises were designed to appeal to different MBTI types and make those of us with different types/dominant functions utilise our less preferred ones at certain times. So the learning worked at two levels – a number of delegates had light-bulb moments when they realised what was happening. The feedback sessions we gave on our best fit were particularly illuminating; whilst having a fixed feedback format is extremely useful – makes sure you do what it says on the tin, it also meant that having looked at the expressed preference for your partner you could adopt a feedback style that would suit that preference. For me it meant working harder, but also enabled the other person to get the most out of it and provided me with an opportunity to exercise my less preferred type (my partner and I were opposites – by accident rather than design).

Several of the exercises were designed to help us to learn from the differences of others on the course, such as designing our ideal studies according to our dominant functions. The end results were different in some key aspects, but the ways in which the different groups conducted this exercise were more illuminating – even down to the amount of space between individuals around the flipchart!

I also have very fond memories of the picture exercise. The Es among us (yes that does include me) got very excited about the time of year, the artist – and in my case which coast we were on, whilst others focused more on how the picture made them feel. There was a certain amount of high fiving when we got the artist and coast right, but as an exercise it amply demonstrated how we used our different types to view the world.

The course materials were comprehensive and importantly for me Leanne reviewed research on MBTI and culture. For many of us working with diverse groups of employees/clients it is essential to be able to show that the instrument being used is equally applicable to all.

The one quibble I have is that on the course we were told that the tertiary function was unknown in terms of E or I, but the manual says it is the same as the auxiliary and inferior functions. This is confusing and needs clarification, particularly if using MBTI with individuals further along in their lives, when they might be looking at developing these less preferred functions.

The course has both expanded my knowledge and given me another way of working with individuals and groups. Being observed providing feedback was nerve-wracking as was the exam (80% needed to pass seemed a bit steep).

Am I a convert? Undoubtedly. In some of my work areas – dysfunctional teams and individuals, MBTI offers a valuable way of providing analysis and feedback that by its very nature enables the individuals to reflect on their type.

I have since attended the Hogan Measures training (also organised by the Forum) and am looking at using it in a recruitment and development context in an organisation with some values issue. I am also hoping to attend the Saville Wave training that is being planned for 2016.

The training was a qualified success – and we all have the certificates to prove it! I am grateful to the Forum for providing the opportunity and also for the special price that they negotiated.