Thesis Title:

"An Exploration into the effectiveness of Personality testing within the workplace for the purpose of selection and recruitment."

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This dissertation was completed in partial fulfilment of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT

As organisations strive to maintain competitiveness and survive in an ever changing and dynamic market environment, our human capital (people) have never been of such importance to organisational success. Through selecting, recruiting, training and harnessing the right talent, competitive advantage may be achieved.

Recruitment and selection is indeed an expensive, time consuming and sometimes unproductive task to undertake. It is a necessary yet often unyielding process if not approached in the correct manner and with the appropriate tools. In an attempt to identify the most effective and appropriate selection technique a study was undertaken into the effectiveness of personality testing.

The reliability and validity of personality tests as a means of recruitment and selection were reviewed during this research study. In depth research into organisations that utilise personality testing were conducted and their opinions and results of personality testing as an effective selection tool were reviewed. Organisations that utilise an alternative method of selection and who do not use personality testing as part of the recruitment process were also taken into account. The organisations recruitment and selections procedure were monitored and compared to those organisations that utilise personality testing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHORISATION DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of a BA (Hons) in Human Resource Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged with the text of my work.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The main aim of this research project was to evaluate and review personality testing as an effective and useful selection technique within Irish companies. As the term psychometric testing is quite broad, this research project concentrates on personality testing and its use as a selection tool.

For the purpose of this research project personality testing tools were analysed in detail and an examination of how effective they are within the workplace to select staff. Various available personality questionnaires were investigated including the most frequently used and those with the highest reliability and validity measures. In order to establish the effectiveness of personality questionnaires in-depth research was conducted into organisations that use psychometric testing as a tool against those who use alternative methods. To conclude an analysis of the findings was conducted. Individuals personal experience of personality questionnaires was also reviewed in order to extract their views.

From my experience and findings it is evident that organisations with less than fifty employees incorporate testing and larger organisations tend to stick to traditional methods of selection such as interviewing and reference checking. The research revealed that the financial services sector is most likely to undertake personality testing as part if its selection process. Those organisations who utilise personality testing and who took part in this research study have all reported an improvement in their selection process as a result of this tool.

As a holder of the Certificate of Competence in Psychological testing at Level B, I have also been able to add my own personal experience and recommendations to this research project.

In this research dissertation, the research has been segmented over 5 chapters. Chapter 1 literature review, examines the history of personality testing and identifies the main theorists within this area. The reliability and validity of testing are also investigated along with legislation governing the practice of tests. Chapter 2 takes a closer look at the psychometric industry in general, recent trends, and regulations within the industry. Within chapter 3 the methodology of the primary research that was

undertaken has been examined. The objectives of the research have been outlined along with reasons for choosing particular methods of research. Chapter 4 reports on the findings of the research. The final section of the dissertation, chapter 5 identifies the limitations of the research and also future recommendations. Alternative options to traditional personality testing are also investigated.

CHAPTER 1   LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1   Overview of Topic

Psychometric testing refers to the testing of an individual's ability, personality or aptitude in relation to a particular setting. This chapter will explore in further detail testing in relation to an individual's personality. The factors that influence personality and how personality can be assessed will also be considered.

1.2   Overview of Psychometric Tests

Psychometric tests are becoming increasingly popular with organisations in an attempt to select and recruit the most suitable candidates for roles, and also to identify candidates for promotion / training. It has been estimated that some 70% of UK organisations test their workforce either for personality or ability before making a job offer or conferring a promotion (Personnel today magazine 05)

Types of Psychometric Tests

According to Saville Holdsworth "SHL" (Toplis Dulewicz Fletcher) (Healy L 2004) Psychometric testing falls into three main types:
- o   Ability testing
- o   Aptitude Testing
- o   Personality testing

Ability Testing:
Ability refers to an individual's skill or knowledge within a particular area (SHL). There are different types of ability tests to include Attainment tests, these measure the results or knowledge gained through formal training or education.

Aptitude Tests:
This type of test measures an individual's ability to acquire further knowledge, skills and IQ or Intelligence tests, they assess a unitary measure of general intelligence.

Personality Testing:

The Occupational Personality Questionnaire "OPQ" definition of personality is "a person's typical or preferred way of behaving, thinking and feeling". Personality testing access's the appropriateness of an individuals personality profile to a given work environment or role. In personality testing there are no right or wrong answers just an appropriate one to fit a particular work environment.

Psychometric tests are assessment techniques designed to measure a range of human characteristics including intellectual ability/aptitude, personality, motivation, interests and values. Psychometric tests are structured, written or computer-based exercises. They should have been carefully designed to measure whether you have the specific abilities or personal qualities in relation to the job specification. Your score (or profile) is compared with the scores of previous, successful applicants and/or successful employees, to predict your potential for performing effectively in the job (University of West Minister, Psychology dept 2004). Alternatively, psychometric tests may be used at the final stage of selection, as part of an assessment centre. In this case, the tests may not carry any more weight than the other elements of the selection procedure. (University of West Minster, Psychology dept 2004)

1.3 Literature related to personality testing.

Saville and Hodsworth (1999) define personality as
"those relatively stable and enduring aspects of an individual which distinguishes them from other people, making them unique, but which at the same time permit a comparison between individuals"

In their recent book on Psychological Testing, Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher (2005) describe personality as a term used to describe an individuals behaviour and the way it is organised and controlled when an individual interacts within a given environment. Characteristics that comprise personality include emotional adjustment, social relations, interests, values and attitudes. (Dworetzky 1994) believes that it is a combination of individual's characteristics which define an individual's personality.

One of the problems for personality assessment in the past has been a lack of agreement over the meaning of personality.

The term personality is derived from the Latin word "persona". (Saville and Hodsworth). The term was first used to signify the mask used by actors in Greek theatre to portray different roles, the word gradually came to signify the character being portrayed rather that the mask itself. There are role theorists who regard personality as nothing more that a series of assumed roles which individuals act out in different circumstances.

This view was best portrayed by Shakespeare in his play "As you like it". Shakespeare viewed the world as a stage, and claimed all the men and women in the world were merely acting out a part, during an individual's life time they would play many parts.

Research suggests that although we are able to adapt our behaviour to particular circumstances, there is considerable consistency in our behaviour across situations and over time. It is these consistencies in behaviour, which constitute the essence of most definitions of personality. (SHL) (Kaplan, Saccuzzo) (Anastasi 1997) (Dworetzky 1994)

Both Dworetzky (1994) and Saville (1999) believe that personality is a changing thing, but still shows certain stabilities. Saville believes that an individual's personality may be influenced or changed by some of the following characteristics

- o Life Experience
- o Age
- o Educational
- o Family
- o Socio-cultural
- o Situational
- o Genetic

1.4   Personality Theorists

Personality theorists can be traced back to 1886 most notably to one of the most famous theorists Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) (Saville Hodsworth 1999). Many

theorists have drawn upon Freud's work but some psychologists view his theories as more literature than science based. Freud put forward that there were 3 main components to human personality – the ID the Ego and the Superego. Freud's approach was known as the Psychoanalytic Approach.

Lowman describes the Myres Briggs Type Indicator, "MBTI" developed by I.B. Myres and K.C. Briggs. Loman (1991) described the indictor as a theoretically constructed test based on Carl Jungs theory of psychology types. (Jung 1922)

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychologist, was the first man to theorise that people always prefer certain identifiable behaviours if they are given a free choice. He also believed that on the basis of human preferences, they can be divided in different personality types. Due to the deafening noise of Freud's theories, Carl Jung's types were not taken seriously. Jung had theorised that there are four main ways in which we experience the world sensing, intuition, feeling and thinking. He argued that each person tended to emphasise one mode over the other. (Jung 1922)

Myres Briggs in their book "Gifts Differing" believe that each individual is born with different gifts and a unique way of behaving, using our minds, and feelings in every day living. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator argues that people have specific preferences, which in turn influence their behaviour. The way people use their minds, make judgements and perceive a situation will shape their personality. The MBTI is based on Jungian theory. It is a self-assessment questionnaire requiring the respondent to answer true or false to a serious of questions in relation to their preference.

1.4.1 Myres Briggs Type Indicator

The MBTI instrument describes an individual's preferences on four dimensions.
- o Extraverted or Introverted
- o Sensing or Intuitive
- o Thinking or Feeling
- o Judging or perceiving

See MBTI table 1, Appendix 1 Personality Theorists

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The various combinations of these preferences result in 16 personality 'types', each associated with a unique set of behavioural characteristics and values. These provide a useful starting point for individual feedback, self-exploration or group discussion.

1.4.2   Occupational Personality Questionnaire

The "OPQ" Occupational Personality Questionnaire is a suite of questionnaires designed to assess the typical or preferred behaviours of individuals in a way that is relevant to the world of work. (Saville 1999) Researched and developed in the early 1980's with the help of 50 major British organisations the OPQ was introduced in 1984 in Britain and is now used worldwide. The OPQ divides personality onto 32 scales representing aspects of typical behaviours concerned with relationships with people, thinking style and emotions.

"OPQ32 is the most widely used Occupational Personality Questionnaire and is available in over 20 languages, with an unparalleled worldwide research base. OPQ32 is a personality questionnaire for use in the selection and development of people at work.   It provides valuable information on people's preferred behaviour on 32 relevant characteristics." SHL Questions are presented on screen and responses are entered directly. The computer can then score and produce a variety of in-depth and user friendly profiles and reports, quickly and effectively.

1.4.3   The Big 5

Paul Costa and Robert McCrae (at the National Institutes of Health), and Warren Norman (at the University of Michigan)/Lewis Goldberg (at the University of Oregon) developed the personality theory of The Big Five. The research teams concluded that most human personality traits can be boiled down to five broad dimensions of personality, regardless of language or culture. In scientific circles, the Big Five is one of the most widely accepted and used models of personality. Howard, P and Howard, J, 2004 from the Centre for Applied Cognitive Studies believe that the BIG 5 is an evolution of the Myres Briggs Type Indicator. It is the most recent personality theory that has been most widely accepted by personality psychologists. They describe the BIG 5 as possessing 5 dimensions of personality, with an emphasis on individual traits. Individual's preferences are based on the strength of their score.

The 5 characteristics include

- o Stability Factor
- o Extraversion Factor
- o Originality Factor
- o Accommodation Factor
- o Consolidation

See The Big 5 tables 2 to 6, Appendix 1 Personality Theorists

1.5   Background & History to Psychometric Testing

Toplis, Dulewicz and Fletchers (2005) book "Psychological Testing" stated that contrary to popular belief psychological testing is well over 100 years, and is not a new concept. It did not originate in the US but was first used by Munsterberg in Austria to select tram drivers. (Kaplan 1997) (Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher 2005) (Aiken 1998) (Anastasi, Urbina 1997) concur that Binets Intelligence test first introduced in 1905 was the first intelligence test. The test initially contained 30 items of increasing difficulty and was designed to identify intellectually subnormal individuals. The test was revised in 1908, 1911 and again in 1916 with the assistance of L.M. Terman of Stanford University. Binet developed a norm group, which was a large group of children who he administered the test to.   This group was representative of other individuals he would test. Each individual response would be checked against the responses of the norm group.

The need for intelligence and personality tests grew as the military in World War I and II sought a tool to assist them to choose suitable personnel for various roles. In "Psychological Testing" (Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher 2005) stated in their book that the first personality questionnaire used as a selection instrument was Woodsworth's Personal Data Sheet, a rough screening device for identifying seriously neurotic men who would be unfit for the American Army during World War 1. This was a paper and pen test that would be considered basic in today's terms. Woodsworth is today given the credit of introducing the first personality questionnaire. This inventory was used to detect soldier's who were likely to break down during combat, and it enabled thousands of candidates to be processed very quickly in a situation where interviews with every recruit were not practical. The Personal Data Sheet was the forerunner of

the adjustment inventories used as screening instruments to identify candidates for counselling.

The two world wars were a major driving force in testing, recruiters on both sides of the Atlantic being faced with a massive need for assessments and very little time. Test and questionnaires were used to allocate men to posts most appropriate to their abilities and as part of their procedure to select officers. In "Psychological Testing" Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher outlined that following World War II there was a steady growth in the use of tests in the USA in both the public sector and by private organisations. Research previously carried out into the costs and benefits of selection showed that major benefits can result from testing. The main test users after World War II in the United Kingdom were the Forces, the Civil Service and some large public corporations. In a survey of methods used for managerial, professional and skilled manual selection conducted by the CIPD (Recruitment Survey Report, May 2001), 60% of respondents used tests of specific skills, 55% used general ability tests, 45% used literacy and numeracy tests, and 41% used personality questionnaires. (Psychological Testing CIPD) Anastasi Urbina (1997) concur with the CIPD that personality testing although popular still lags behind general ability testing

See Appendix 2, Background & History for further details

1.6 Reliability and Validity

When it comes to choosing or evaluating a test, the two most important areas of consideration are the reliability and validity of the test. Saville defines test reliability as "The reliability of a test is concerned with its precision of measurement. Put another way, reliability involves the errors of measurement within the test and its administration and scoring"(Saville 1999). The higher the reliability of a test the higher is consistency was when given to the same group of individuals. Each test has been previously administrated to a norm group. This is a large group of individuals who have previously completed the test; they are representative of the individual. Each test score or response from a personality questionnaire is a raw score; it is only valid or reliable when compared to the scores of the norm group. Individual's results may deviate above or below the average norm group.

The reliability of a test is normally tested through the method known as test-retest reliability, which assesses the test's stability or consistency. This method involves correlating the scores obtained by a group of individuals with their scores when retested after a short period of time normally 4 weeks (SHL 1999). In relation to personality profiles the reliability coefficient should be 0.65 or above. Reliability is measured on a scale of 0 to 1. With 1 being completely reliable. Tests must be supported by a reliability co-efficient if not never use them.

Validity

The validity of a test refers to how appropriate the test is in relation to what it is we are trying to measure. Saville defines test validity, as "A test, interview or any other assessment procedure is valid to the extent that it is relevant to and predicts job and / or training performance" A test may be reliable but not valid therefore validity sets the upper boundary. According to (Saville 1999) the validity or the appropriateness of a test may be examined in the following ways

Face Validity – this refers to whether a test looks relevant or right for a particular job. Individuals choosing tests on this basis should also look at the statistical data backing up the test.

Content Validity – this refers to the content of test and how it relates to the content of the role. A job analysis should be drawn up and related to the content of the test.

Empirical Validity – This may be measured in 2 ways, through Concurrent or Predicative Validity. Empirical validity correlates job performance and test scores.

1.7   Ethics of Testing

As psychometric testing becomes increasingly popular amongst organisations the question of ethics surrounding testing is often a controversial topic. In Ireland and the UK the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) and the British Society of Psychological Society (BPS) are 2 professional bodies with a high degree of interest and involvement in testing. (Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher 2005). The (CIPD) concur with the (BPS) in their view of procedures relating to ethical testing and have published a guideline of questions, which should be answered by all parties involved in testing. The questions set out should give insight and answer the following requirements as described in their book "Psychological Testing" by Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher.

- o The purpose of the test should be communicated to all and be clear prior to administrating the test.
- o It is clear to all parties how the testing information will be used.
- o Test results should only be scored, administered and evaluated by suitable qualified individuals.
- o Applicant equality is ensured throughout the testing process.

1.7.1 Policy Statement

Individuals who complete psychometric tests are entitled to a fair, professional and confidential experience. The SHL Group (1999) in their manual Occupational Personality Questionnaires urge companies who are administering tests to introduce a policy statement covering tests to ensure high ethics are maintained.

The policy statement should address the following key points:–

- o Only personals qualified to use tests should administer, score or give feedback on tests.
- o The choice of test should be selected in relation to the job specification. The validity of the test is essential.
- o Only qualified personnel should be allowed to interpret results, raw data should not be given to respondents.
- o Feedback is recommended in every situation.
- o Tests must be held in a confidential and secure area and adhere to the Data Protection Act 1988. Individuals are entitled to a copy of their results.
- o Tests should be continuously monitored to ensure they are relevant to the job.

1.7.2 New York Truth in Testing Law

The New York Truth in Testing Law is a specific piece of legislation introduced in New York to ensure tests remain ethical. (Aiken, L.R 1998) (Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher 2005). This law was passed to ensure boards, centres and individuals designing, administering, and scoring tests did so in a fair and ethical manner. The New York Truth Testing Law requires companies to comply with 3 requests they include

(1) Disclose all studies on the validity of tests.
(2) Provide a complete disclosure to students about what scores mean and how they were calculated.
(3) On request by a student provide a copy of the test questions, the correct answer and the student's answers.

1.8   Irish Legislation

Ireland has very little history when it comes to case law and psychometric testing. The main laws governing Psychometric testing in Ireland are the Data Protection Act 1988, 2003 and the Equality Act 2004. (IBEC) (CIPD) (Department Enterprise Trade and Employment)

1.8.1   Data Protection Act 1988, 2003

Legal responsibilities as a Data Controller as outlined by the (Data Protection Commissioner 1988, 2003)

Individuals who maintain data have key responsibilities in relation to the information they keep on computer about other individuals.   These key responsibilities are outlined in terms of eight "Rules" which must be followed,

- o   Data controllers must obtain and process the information fairly.
- o   Keep information only for one or more specified and lawful purposes.
- o   Process information only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to you initially.
- o   Keep all information safe and secure.
- o   Ensure information is kept accurate and up-to-date.
- o   Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- o   Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes.
- o   Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual, on request. (Data protection commissioner 1988, 2003)

These provisions are binding on every data controller.   Any failure to observe them would be a breach of the Act.

In a report by Fergus Glavey The Data Protection Commissioner entitled "The Eleventh Annual Report of the Data protection Commissioner 1999" Glavey outlines that for the purposes of recruitment and selection personal data collected by employers for employment should be relevant and not excessive.

In the course of a recruitment procedure, the data collected should be limited to such as be necessary to evaluate the suitability of prospective candidates and their career potential.

1.8.2 Equality Act 1998 and 2004

The recently amended Employment Equality Act 1998, now the Equality Act 2004 came into operation from the 19th July 2004 (IBEC). It is imperative for test designers and test administers to use tests cautiously and ensure their tests comply with the act, and do not in any way discriminate against individuals covered under the act.

As outlined by The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) The Equality Act 2004 was deemed necessary to implement the employment and non-employment aspects of the Race Directive the Framework Employment Directive and the Gender Equal Treatment Directive. In this Act the opportunity was also taken to provide for a number of procedural amendments to the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

The main provisions of the Equality Act 2004, prohibit inequality or treating individuals less favourably than another person would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the following grounds.

- o Gender
- o Race
- o Age
- o Marital Status
- o Religion
- o Membership of the travelling community
- o Ethic origin
- o Sexual orientation
- o Disability

1.9 Recent Developments in Testing

In a report published by the (CIPD 2003) on developments within the area of Psychological testing they identified that many of the test providers now offer online versions of their tests and tools. The CIPD survey established that overall the proportion of companies making use of online testing (either for the purposes of self-selection or selection) is currently relatively small: 6% in 2003. The CIPD also found that this method of assessment is growing in popularity - particularly in areas such as graduate recruitment and where large employers are faced with high volumes of applicants.

1.10 Legal Cases and Controversy

There has been little litigation claims in relation to psychometric testing. To date there has not been any such claims in Ireland, so UK cases have been referred to. There is much controversy surrounding the area of testing. SHL claims approximately 5,500 organisations worldwide as clients, ranging from major international banks and retailers to football teams. According to SHL, psychometric testing provides the best single indicator of performance on the job and in training that is available to companies.

Frank Landy CEO of SHL's litigation support unit, based in the UK describes how tests designed to gauge intelligence levels and potential performance has been singled out for criticism. In particular, IQ tests attract a great deal of criticism, as many believe that they are biased towards Caucasian middle-class culture.

Landy cites that he can think of very few cases where a company has been involved in any legal action regarding the use of testing. He believes that in reality companies are highly unlikely to be sued for use of such tests.

Landy feels that the issues of sexual discrimination, downsizing of older staff and intentional discrimination are much larger issues and are areas that companies must pay close attention to. Some countries have developed legislation in the area of discrimination in testing. For example, some countries such as the UK allow racial norming in administering tests - by which the score of any particular candidate is scored against the norm for their racial group, rather than the overall norm. This

practice has been outlawed in the US since 1991 - but there still haven't been any lawsuits. In other countries, such as Sweden, any cases would be filtered through the labour unions and committees, which have the power to adjust decisions taken by employers, making any threat of litigation unlikely. The reality is that unless a company is actively discriminating among people for example, by refusing to hire women without a good reason they are highly unlikely to be challenged over the use of psychometric testing.

UK Litigation Cases

Psychometric testing is used more widespread in the UK and as a consequence has seen a number of organisation been brought to court in relation to test discrimination. Both Plank v GNER Ltd October 2004 and British Rail in 1990's cases outline some of the potential pitfalls of psychometric testing. See Appendix 4 UK Litigation Cases.

These two cases highlight the CIPD, BPS and SHL's viewpoint in relation to ethical testing. To ensure tests are ethical, evaluate the validity of the tests in relation to the role.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Personality testing has evolved over the past 100 years; the majority of theories were developed between 1930 and 1960. The Big 5 developed by Costa, McCrae, Norman and Goldberg is the latest widely accepted theory in relation to personality testing. Although there has been much controversy in relation to personality testing, the tests published by Myres Briggs, OPQ, The Big 5 and the 16PF are all considered to be reliable, and when validity is applied robust instruments. There are however additional concerns in relation to testing such as fairness and equality which have all been addressed within this chapter.

CHAPTER 2   CONTEXT OF INDUSTRY

2.1   Chapter Overview

The nature and regulations affecting psychometric testing are continuously changing. With organisations striving to attract the best possible candidates from a limited pool of talent personality testing is becoming of increasing importance. Throughout this chapter attention will be paid to bodies governing the practice of personality testing and also trends that have occurred over the past number of decades within the UK and Ireland.

2.2   Regulations within Testing

The two main professional and governing bodies in the UK and Ireland with a considerable interest and role in psychometric testing are the BPS and the CIPD. A further advocate of best practice is The International Test Commission who has contributed to heightening awareness of raising the bar for test developers and administrators.

2.2.1   The British Psychological Society (BPS)

The BPS is the representative body for psychologists and psychology in the UK and Ireland, with over 42,000 members.   The Steering Committee on Test Standards (SCTS) has been operating under the Professional Practice Board for a number of decades with the aim of promoting high technical standards in the design and development of Occupational tests and their use by psychologists and non-psychologists.

The Psychological Testing Centre (PTC) was formed in January 2003 to unite activities in Psychological Testing. Areas covered included the use and availability of tests, the training requirements and qualifications of test administrators and the standards for the construction of tests.   Under the code of good practice for psychological practice the BPS expect individuals who use testing for assessment purposes to conform to the following guidelines. (British Psychological Society)

Responsibility for Competence

Test administrators must ensure they hold the relevant qualification and level of competence as outlined by the society, and to develop their competence further as a test user.

Procedures and Techniques

Only use tests in conjunction with another assessment measure. Score and administer results as outlined by the test developer. Ensure all test material and results are securely stored and ensure no unqualified individual has access to the tests.

Client Welfare

Ensure that all test takers are clear and informed in relation to the purpose of the test, and understand the instructions. Ensure client confidentially is maintained and test information is not passed to a 3rd party without consent. Provide feedback to the client in a clear manner which is understood.

2.2.2   Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD)

The CIPD introduced a guide on psychological testing in 1997 (Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher 2005). The guide set out regulations and a code of conduct which all occupational testers should abide by. It is similar in nature to the BPS and includes matters such as test should only be administered by qualified personnel, feedback should be given in a clear and understandable manner, equality should be maintained when testing, test should be appropriate.

2.2.3 International Test Commission (ITC)

The ITC was established in 1978 and is an association of test publishers, psychological associations and organisations who are committed to promoting effective, ethical assessment instruments. The ITC guidelines and regulations in relation to the use of tests centres around 2 main areas. Tests used meet with minimum technical quality standards, and second that people using tests are competent and adequately qualified to do so. The test guideline project was introduced in an attempt to develop uniform practice around the world in the area of testing, and to develop best practice, polices and procedures. The ITC test project received the backing of the BPS, APA and EFPPA, along with a large number of European and US test publishers.

2.2.4 Levels of Training Available

Toplis, Dulewicz, Fletcher (2005) identified 5 levels of training required to administer and interpret tests. The CIPD and the BPS also acknowledge and agree with these levels of training. Level 1 refers to the level of training required to prepare a room, introduce a test and answer questions in relation to the test. A 2nd level is the training required to interrupt results? The 3rd level is the Certificate of Competence in Psychological testing at Level A. This refers to an understanding of psychometric tests. A 4th and 5th level refers to a Certificate of Competence in Psychological testing at Level B for questionnaires measuring personality, interests or values. At present only psychologists have full level B certificates (level 5).

2.3 Changing Scope of Recruitment Agencies

Recruitment agencies have changed in nature over the past 10 years. An increasing number of agencies are invoking on and providing additional HR services in an attempt to become a one stop shop. Some of these services include psychometric testing on behalf of clients. As an agency and test provider certain additional regulations apply to these recruitment agencies in terms of testing such as regulations under the NRF and Agency License Act 1971.

The National Recruitment Federation (NRF) of Ireland which is a voluntary organisation set up to establish and maintain standards within the recruitment industry in Ireland represents over 120 members nationwide. The NRF has established a code of conduct endorsed by An Tanaiste Mary Harney which all members must abide by. The code sets out the procedure for administering any type of test to candidates and states that tests must be carried out by properly licensed and qualified testers and must comply with normal standards and ethics of test procedures. (National Recruitment Federation)

Employment Agency Act 1971

The Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment issues agency licenses renewable on an annual basis to recruitment agencies operating within Ireland. Under the Employment Agency Act 1971 agencies must abide by regulations in relation to the interviewing, testing and storage of candidate information. As set out under the 1971 Act, agencies must provide accommodation-enabling persons to be interviewed and tested in private. The agency premises must be equipped with adequate seating for the number of persons likely to attend at the premises. Candidate information must be stored safely and not forwarded to any other individual without the prior knowledge and consent of the candidate. (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)

2.4   Recent Reports and Trends within Personality testing

The Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD) broadly supports the use of psychological testing and believes that, used appropriately; testing can enhance decision-making, thus enabling managers to develop more informed and accurate perceptions about the ability and potential of individuals. To achieve this it is essential to integrate testing into the decision-making process.

Particular care should also be taken to ensure that tests themselves do not indirectly discriminate unfairly between certain groups. Test use alone is no guarantee of objectivity despite their scientific background.

The CIPD does not make recommendations on the validity or quality of particular tests and is concerned solely with the process of testing.

2.4.1 CIPD Survey and Report 2005

In the CIPD 2005 Annual report after surveying over 715 organisations it was reported that the most commonly used selection technique was an interview based on the candidates CV, followed by a competency based interview. Table 7, Appendix 2 CIPD Survey Report 2005 highlights the methods each industry sector uses to select candidates. In this survey it showed that 46% of UK organisations surveyed use personality testing as a selection tool, the most widely used method of selection is interviewing a candidate based on the contents of their CV. Out of 14 methods surveyed personality questionnaires ranked as the 6th most popular and used method of selection. Table 8, Appendix 4 CIPD Survey Report 2005, highlights the most effective methods of selection as rated by participants

See Selection methods, tables 7 and 8, Appendix 4 CIPD Survey and Report 2005

2.4.2 Trends within Personality Testing

Wolf & Jenkins (2002) undertook a study on behalf of the centre for the economies and political science London to identify changes in the testing field. They interviewed and researched over 53 organisations and identified that the trend to administer psychometric tests as a means of selection was on the increase. Wolf & Jenkins researched 6 possible hypothesis for the increase in the use of testing and found the 2 most notably factors contributing to the increase in testing were attributed to companies belief and need for an ethical and fair selection procedure and one which reduced the possibility of litigation and tribunals. They found that organisations are increasingly becoming concerned about selection techniques and recourse from candidates. The organisations interviewed believed personality and ability tests could be well validated and if developed by a professional and responsible body were fair and ethical.

The 2nd factor contributing to the increase in testing was that testing was a response to support internal change and in particular due to formalised HR policies. (Wolf & Jenkins 2002). Findings showed that the structure of the HR department was changing. HR Practitioners were qualified within the area of testing, and also believed in the benefits of psychometric testing as a selection technique. This view was promoted throughout the organisation.

Further reports and studies have all contributed to the findings that testing is on the increase. Data from the (CIPD 2001) annual report show an increase in companies administering tests. The CIPD surveyed 252 companies in 2001, each company employed 50 plus workers, 60.1% of employers reported that they tested applicants on a specific skill, and 40.7% employers used personality testing as a selection tool. This figure as discussed above has now increased to 46% based on CIPD research. Shackleton and Newell (1991) cited that out of a sample of 120 companies from the Times 1000, 1988 64% of companies for the selection of management candidates used personality tests.

In an article in the Financial Times (July 2005), Sullivan cited that personality testing was enjoying a renaissance and personality testing was now being used by top companies in a bid to select the most appropriate candidate. Sullivan states that a survey of FTSE 100 companies conducted by the "Test Agency" a psychometric test publisher found that out of 73 organisations responding to the survey, 59 companies declared that they use psychometric tests. The head of HR at Virgin Mobile in the UK Maher, P stated that he has seen a rise in retention rates after he began using personality tests over 2 years ago. Maher stated "they have helped us better identify which individuals would enjoy and fit our culture". Previously newcomers to the company have arrived and it has taken up to 12 months for them to realise that Virgin Mobile's self-directed culture is not for them"

See Appendix 5 Articles relating to Personality Testing

2.5   Market Leaders

There are 100's of tests for organisations to choose from. In research undertaken by (Andrew Jenkins 2001) from the Centre for the Economics of Education he found the SHL (OPQ) was the most commonly used test. *See tests commonly used, table 9, Appendix 6 Andrew Jenkins Survey 2005*

The survey carried out by the Industrial Relations Services found that of 75 surveyed companies who use testing tools, 25 companies use SHL's OPQ self report questionnaire. SHL dominate the UK and Irish market for both personality and ability tests (Wolf and Jenkins 2002). With over 2500 corporate clients and a turnover of £65 million worldwide SHL is becoming increasingly popular amongst organisations. The SHL range of personality assessment products include

OPQ 32, ipsative and normative version. The OPQ is part of the family of tests, other shorter versions include Customer Contact styles questionnaire, work styles questionnaire, Images 1.

Other popular and commonly used instruments include the 16PF and the PPA. The PPA refers to the personal profile analysis. This instrument is again a self report questionnaire asking respondents to choose a word that most describes and least describes their personality within a work situation out of 4 possible choices. The largest provider of this instrument in Ireland and the UK is Thomas International.

2.6   Why use Tests

According to (Evans, N. 2005) from the British Psychological Society the rise in the use of tests can be attributed to the rising number of applicants applying through the internet for positions, in particular from recent graduates. Wolf and Jenkins 2002 conducted research into why organisations use tests. Their research concluded that the main factors influencing test use within organisations were due to the following.

- o   Structured / Formal HR Dept

    As HR departments become more structured and HR practitioners are becoming trained in level A & B (BPS), they are pushing best practice of implementing tests down the ranks at their organisations.

- o   Fear of litigation – fair/ethical

A robust test will not only be reliable and valid but will also avoid any type of discrimination against applicants. More and more organisations in an attempt to avoid litigation are reverting to fair tests as part of their selection process.

o War and Search for talent / Competitive Advantage

Through testing, organisations have found that they can identify the most suitable candidates for the role and also candidates whose personality profile fits the culture of the organisation.

o Need to increase in the softer skills team building and flexibility

Employees not only need to possess the ability and skills to carry out a role, but also need to be able to lead and build teams when necessary. Through personality profiles organisations can understand to a greater extent the softer side and preferred working style of potential employees.

o Diversity Recruitment

To qualify academic results from candidates from new countries, or to provide evidence of skills. As much diversity exists within the workplace it is necessary to test both soft and hard skills not only to qualify ability but also to access if there is a cultural fit.

2.7   Summary

Personality testing has increased in popularity and use over the past 3 decades. Reports and research conducted by the CIPD, BPS and independent sources have all reported an increase in organisational use of testing as a selection tool. In order to maintain a high level of practice and ethical fairness the industry is regulated. The benefits and reasons why organisations utilise personality and ability tests as a selection tool are explored and outweigh the reasons not to use testing.

CHAPTER 3   PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Chapter Overview

Having conducted a theoretical summary of the use of Psychometric testing within the workplace, for the purpose of selection and recruitment a research study was undertaken to qualify and quantify the effectiveness of personality testing as a selection tool.

Primary Data - This research study involved the use of both primary and secondary data. Primary data as defined by (Domegan, Fleming, 1999) can be described as data or information that is collected first hand by a researcher in order to solve specific research objectives. It is information collected for the specific purpose at hand in order to solve specific research objectives. (Domegan, Fleming, 1999) It is crucial to observe that a primary research project is warranted only if the information is actionable and worth the collection costs (Crask, Fox, and Stout 1995). Brannick and Roche (1997) describe primary research methodology as a decision making process.

Secondary Data - Secondary data provides a good starting point for research helping to define problems and research objectives while also deciding what further research needs to be undertaken in the primary collection. According to Cooper and Schinder (2001), examining secondary data is an integral part of a larger research study .Secondary data can be collected much quicker and at a lower cost than primary data (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong 2001). However, researchers must evaluate secondary sources carefully to make sure it is "relevant, accurate current and impartial" (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong 2001). It is also imperative to collect primary data as secondary sources can obtain information that is old or out of date (Brannick and Roche 1997).

3.2   Research Objectives

After considering the available literature on personality testing, eight research objectives were established as set out Appendix 7 Research Objectives & Methods

3.3   Qualitative Research V's Quantitative Research

Deciding which method of research should be undertaken and developing a plan for gathering it efficiently is the first step in the research process. There are two types, namely qualitative and quantitative research.(Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders &Wong) Emory and Cooper (1991) suggest, that it is possible to have the best of both approaches: to collect the ideas the exploratory stage and then to design a survey, which quantifies the significant data. The research objectives previously stated are mainly qualitative and quantitative in nature and for this reason the author has decided to gather data which will be representative of both.

In order for researchers to collect effective qualitative and quantitative information the following research methods can be used:

3.4   Research Methodology

An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people. As shown in table 10 ,(see Appendix 7)there are a wide array of interview methods to choose from. They can be highly formalised and structured, using standard questions for each respondent, or they may be informal and unstructured conversations.

Structured interviews - This type of interview is built around a pre-planned format using directed questions. (Weisner and Cronshaw 1988). As interviewing can be often subject to underlying biases which affect the selection decision (Anderson and Shackleton 1993), care must be taken in order to carefully read out the questions in the same tone of voice so that the researcher does not indicate any bias (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 1997).

Semi Structured Interviews - A semi-structured interview is a two-way conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining the relevant research information from the respondent. Cooper and Schindler (2001). It is a means of

collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions in order to find out what they think or feel (Hussey, Collis 2003). In order to achieve the researchers' objectives the interview is pre-structured while allowing a degree of probing and flexibility. The researcher therefore aims to evaluate personality testing as a method of selection through interviews and discussions with people who are knowledgeable about the topic under investigation. The main benefits of undertaking a semi structured interview as cited by Honey (1987), it allows the researcher to capture how a person thinks by questioning the subject about his/her beliefs.

Interviews

It was decided to use semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method in order to achieve the eight research objectives. In total 4 in depth interviews were held, primarily structured in format, which allowed also for a semi-structure format to take place. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) advocate that open questions encourage the respondent to give a comprehensive and extensive answer.

In order to achieve a balanced viewpoint 2 of the interviews were directed at organisations with a history of personality testing as a selection technique (interview 1 & 2), a further 2 interviews were focused at organisations who use an alternative selection technique (interview 3 & 4). The semi-structured interviews endeavoured to answer and examine research objectives 1 to 8.

3.4.1 Interview 1 and 2 – Personality Test Users

Purpose of Interview 1 and 2: To gain a further insight into the thoughts, and experiences of a company that utilises personality testing. A pre-specified guide detailing a list of 13 questions was prepared in advance by the researcher in order to facilitate the discussion. This form of structure enabled the researcher to receive data still allowing the interviewer to speak freely also allowing probing to explore important issues that emerge during the interview. This method of interviewing is most appropriate as it allows the interviewer to continuously refer to the set questions (Sekarin 2000) It was decided to use a combination of open and closed questions when designing the interview guide. The semi-structured interview began with a probing question to elicit information regarding their experience of personality

testing. The researcher then funnelled down through the questions to examine a number of specific topics in greater detail. In all 4 interviews to both users and non-users of personality testing, only 4 of the questions asked were exactly similar. Copies of the list of questions posed to the interviewees and criteria for selecting the organisations are included in Appendix A and B.

3.4.2 Interview 3 and 4 – Personality Test Non Users

Purpose of Interview 3 and 4: To gain an insight into the thoughts and experiences of a company that utilises an alternative method of selection. A pre-specified guide detailing a list of 11 questions was prepared in advance by the researcher in order to facilitate the discussion. In designing the interview guide it was decided that a combination of open and closed questions be used. The semi-structured interview began with a probing question to elicit information regarding their experience of personality testing. The researcher then funnelled down through the questions to examine a number of specific topics in greater detail allowing the researcher a greater insight into the experiences of the interviewees. Copies of the list of questions posed to the interviewees and criteria for selecting the organisations are included in Appendix C and D.

3.4.3 Focus Group

A focus group as cited by Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, Wong (2001) is a small sample of typical consumers or respondents who are under the direction of a group leader who elicits their reaction to stimulus. The main advantages of a focus group is they allow a wide range of information to be gathered in a relatively short space of time, and they do not require a complex sampling technique. They also allow additional topics to be discussed (Charles Proctor, American Statistical Association 2004)

Purpose of the focus group: The group was established to identify the views and thoughts of applicants who had previously completed personality questionnaires as part of a recruitment process. Research objectives 7 & 8 were address during this group. The focus group consisted of 4 individuals who had previously completed a personality questionnaire. During the discussion with the group a total of 10

questions were discussed. The questions were all open ended in order to extract as much information from respondents. The researcher began with broad questions to make respondents feel at ease. The researcher then moved to more specific questions and issues, still encouraging an easygoing discussion to facilitate group interactions.

Full details of the discussion and criteria for selecting individuals to attend the focus group are included in Appendix H.

3.5   Quantitative Research Methods

It was decided to use Questionnaires as a Quantitative method. Quantitative research is broadly speaking a research methodology that seeks to quantify the data and apply some form of statistically analysis (Malhotra, 1996). Having researched the various quantitative methods outlined in table 10 it was decided that a questionnaire was the most efficient and yielding method to use in order to achieve the research objectives outlined.

The aim of the questionnaire which was tested on both users and non-users was to identify compare and analyse attitudes and opinions of the two groups. In addition the researcher also considered the confidentiality issue for the interviewee and gave assurance it was for the purpose of the research only and would not be submitted at any time to a third party. This it was also decided would help achieve a higher degree of honesty and result in more accuracy for the researcher.

3.5.1   Questionnaire Design

During the primary research, 3 different questionnaires were designed and issued to a variety of organisations and individual applicants to gather different data, Questionnaires **A**, Questionnaire **B** and Questionnaire **C**. Each questionnaire had a specific purpose and each one yielded specific information.

Open Ended Questions: These questions were included as they revel more than closed questions due to the fact that respondents are not limited to their answers. They also allow freedom of expression, such as that with current users if they noticed any change in the type of candidate they selected as a result of using personality testing in

the selection method. Also for non users the cost that may be incurred or how much they would be prepared to pay for such a test, overall opinion on personality tests, and what the most appropriate selection tool is likely to be.

Closed questions:: These were used to obtain the factual information such as the selection tools currently being used and the degree of satisfaction with them for those companies who are currently non subscribers to the personality testing, its reliability and validity and the degree of training involved for current users. Closed questions provide answers that are easier to interpret. Closed questions include all possible answers which allows the candidates to choose among the given choices. (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong 2001).

Multiple choice: These questions were included to ascertain the interview technique(s) currently being used in the selection process and for those who use personality testing its future use in the company, what other methods are currently being used in conjunction with personality testing if any.

Method of Distribution: In order to achieve the highest possible response rate, and speed of return it was decided to email the questionnaires. A link to each questionnaire was sent to each respondent, and completed questionnaires were submitted online. This also facilitated the statistical analysis and compilation of results. It also assured anonymity as respondent's email address and name could not be traced. It was decided to subscribe to online surveys.

3.5.2 Questionnaire A

Title: Individual Users of Personality Testing

Questionnaire A Design - This questionnaire consisted of 13 questions. It was designed in such a way that it included 9 open-ended questions and 4 closed questions. It was decided to use a combination of both closed and open ended questions in order to extract as much accurate and truthful information from participants as possible.

Purpose of Questionnaire A - This was to identify what percentage of the general population had previously completed personality questionnaires, what their opinion to personality testing in general was and details of their experience to date. Questionnaire A was designed to address objective seven to identify the general population's opinion and experience of personality testing.

Sample Population of Questionnaire A - This questionnaire was issued to 49 individual participants rather than organisations, in order to gain an insight into their individual experiences and views in relation to personality testing.

Copies of the questionnaire and criteria for selecting the individuals are included in Appendix E.

3.5.3   Questionnaire B

Title: Non Client Users of Personality Testing

Questionnaire B Design - This included 14 questions, a combination of open ended, closed and multiple choice questions

Sample Population of Questionnaire B - The organisations chosen to complete this questionnaire were organisations known to the author. This questionnaire was administered to organisations that do not use personality testing as a selection technique. The questionnaire was administered and completed by 21 organisations in Ireland who use an alternative method of selection to personality testing.

Purpose of Questionnaire B - This was to identify trends within selection techniques of industry sectors and organisations of similar sizes. Questionnaire B addresses research objectives 3, 4 and 8 and identifies trends within the industry, reactions of organisations to personality testing, alternative methods, issues with other selection techniques.

Copies of the questionnaire and criteria for selecting the organisations are included in Appendix F.

3.5.4   Questionnaire C

Title: Client Users of Personality Testing

Questionnaire C Design -   This questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. A combination of open ended, closed and multiple choice questions complied the questionnaire, 1 closed, 6 multiple choice and 8 open ended questions.

Sample population of Questionnaire C- This questionnaire was administered to 21 organisations that currently use personality testing as a selection technique. A total of 21 organisations from 10 different types of organisations were chosen with the majority in the Service and Manufacturing sectors. This was felt to be appropriate and adequate for the needs of the research, as the author has contacts mainly within these companies and felt assured of receiving a higher response rate.

Purpose of Questionnaire C - This questionnaire was designed for organisations that use personality testing, in order to extract information and make deductions with regard to the merits and pitfalls of personality testing. This questionnaire was designed only for those organisations that use personality testing as a selection technique. This was to allow comparisons with other organisations that use alternative methods of selection.

Copies of the questionnaire and criteria for selecting the organisations are included in Appendix G.

3.6   Triangulation

The researcher choose 3 methods of research, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups in order to achieve triangulation and verify research. Triangulation can be employed in both qualitative and quantitative research. By combining multiple observers, theories, and methods researchers can overcome the weaknesses of intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single theory studies (Triangulation in Research). Gable (1994) Kaplan & Duchan (1988) Lee (1991) Ragin (1987) Mingers (2001) all suggest combining one or more research methods.

3.7   Time Line

Questionnaire and Interview Design: A pilot version of the questionnaire and interview guide was designed by the end of March 2005 and issued to 4 organisations and 4 respondents for their thoughts and feedback.   Alterations in relation to the wording of the questions were made prior to going live in April 2005.

Questionnaires: These were issued to respondents during the first week of April 2005 and the majority of which responded within a 10-day period.   The remaining questionnaires were completed and submitted by the end of April.   As the questionnaires were online, it allowed the respondents ease and swiftness to submit completed questionnaires.

Interviews: These were held over a 4 day period at the end of April 2005 between the 26th and the 29th with one interview taking place on each day.   The interviews were held on site with the particular organisation to facilitate the HR manager of each organisation.   Each interview was recorded on a tape and transcribed at a later date. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour.

Focus Groups: This was held on the 15th of April 2005, and lasted approximately 1 hour. The session was taped and later transcribed.   The focus group took place in the researchers offices.

3.8   Summary

After examining all the possible options, the author decided that the most viable methods of research to undertake were semi-structured interviews and focus groups (qualitative) questionnaires (quantitative) to achieve the objectives stated at the beginning of the chapter.

CHAPTER 4   FINDINGS

4.1   Overview

To satisfy research objectives as set out in Appendix 7, the researcher has used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a focus group. A total of 91 questionnaires were issued to a sample population (both individuals and organisations), 4 semi-structured interviews were held with organisations and a focus group discussion took place. The findings are set out below under each research method
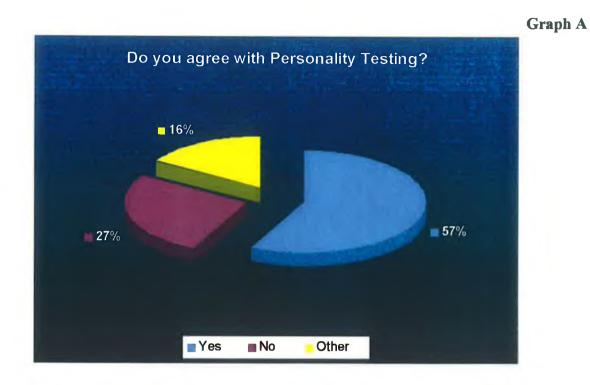
4.2   Quantitative Research findings

4.2.1   Questionnaires

The findings from the three questionnaires will be examined individually.

I.   Questionnaires Individuals experience of personality testing

Overall experience of personality testing

More than half 58% of the sample population had completed personality profiles. 45% of the sample had received feedback. 26% of those individuals who had completed the profile as part of a selection procedure were offered roles with the company. Only 33% of those who were offered roles after completing the personality profile and began working within the position felt they were suited to the role, 33% disagreed and said they felt they were not suited to the position. On average the respondents agreed with personality testing, 57% with just 27% of respondents disagreeing with tests. See Graph A below. 78% of respondents were willing to complete personality profiles as part of the selection process. 47% of respondents, who had experience with personality testing reported to have found the experience positive, 13% had a negative experience, and 20% had no experience at all. Other experiences reported included the "tests were vague and disputable" 8% of respondents "simplistic and inane" 3%.

Do you agree with Personality Testing?

16%

27%

57%

Yes   No   Other

Issues in relation to personality testing

Well over half of the respondents, 65% reported that they find the whole area of psychometric testing to be helpful, with just 12% stating they find it intrusive. Out of the 49 respondents 31 individuals which accounted for 63% of the respondents stated that they had no concerns in relation to personality testing. The remaining 18 individuals accounting for 37% of respondents had various concerns which included "I was never given feedback or a result on my test". This opinion was voiced by 8 of the respondents the remaining respondents cited that "testing is restrictive" "testing is inaccurate and unreliable" or had concerns regarding confidentially.

See Findings A, Appendix I, Individual Users

II   Questionnaires Organisational Non users of personality testing.

Industry Classification

23% of the organisations surveyed fell into the manufacturing sector with 38% of all the organisations employing more than 250 staff. The financial services sector accounted for just 4.5% of organisations surveyed.

Current Selection Practices

The most common selection technique used was structured interviews with 57% of organisations favouring this tool. Ability tests and assessment centres were never

used and just 9.5% of organisations practised unstructured interviews. Nearly every organisation 90.5% agreed that their current selection technique was not adequate enough to choose the most appropriate candidate.

Views in relation to personality testing

90.5% of organisations surveyed were familiar in some way with personality testing, and 80% agreed that they would consider using personality testing as a selection tool. See Graph B below. When asked what their general opinion of personality testing was, 76% of respondents stated they agreed with testing and would find it useful. The remainder of respondents claimed it was unreliable 3%, with 21% stating they were unsure of its effectiveness. When asked how much they would be prepared to pay for each personality profile 35% of respondents were willing to pay 100 Euro or less. 33% of respondents were willing to pay 200 Euro or more. 1% were willing to pay market rates with the remainder of respondents stating they were unsure

Graph B

See Findings B, Appendix J, Non Client Users

I11   Questionnaires Organisational Users of Personality testing
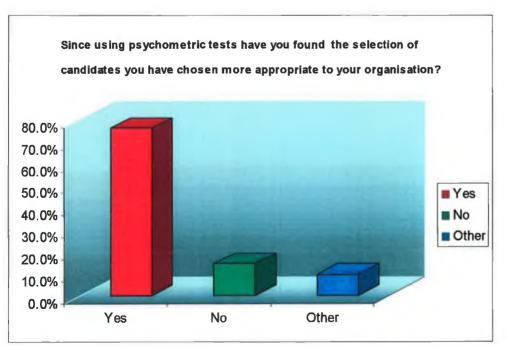
Industry Classification

The majority of users fell into the financial services (29%) and service provider categories (19%), with the FMCG (5%) and transport industry (5%) accounting for the least amount of industry users. More than 40% of respondents employed between 5 and 20 employees.

Personality tools used

The most commonly used personality tool amongst Irish organisations was Thomas International DISC system, the 16PF, the OPQ and the MBTI were also used amongst respondents. 45% of respondents had been using personality questionnaires during the past 12 months. More than half of the organisations surveyed used personality testing in conjunction with structured interviews as their selection tools.

Overview of tests

Since implementing personality questionnaires as part of the selection process, over three quarters of respondents claimed to have chosen more appropriate candidates for their organistion (see graph C below). 40% of respondents noticed a decrease in turnover rates. Well over half of the respondents believe personality predicts performance, with just 16% claiming personality does not predict performance. 85% of respondents would rate personality testing as 3 or more out of a rating of 5 with 5 being the most effective technique.

Graph C

Since using psychometric tests have you found the selection of candidates you have chosen more appropriate to your organisation?

63% of respondents have found personality tests to be both reliable and valid in the past. Although each organisation surveyed utilised personality testing, only 60% of the respondents were trained within the area to either administer tests or give feedback or both. The two most common downsides to personality testing as cited by the respondents were the ability of candidates to manipulate tests and play the game responding with the answers they think are required 21% of respondents felt this was the case. 32% of respondents felt a further downside to testing was the fact that it is a tool that can not be used in isolation and other selection tools still need to be carried out.

See Findings C, Appendix K, Client Users

4.3   Qualitative Research Findings

In order to retain the confidentially of the four organisations the companies are referred to as company X,Y,Z & Q. The findings from the semi-structured interviews are presented under Organisational Users and Non Organisation Users.

4.3.1   Semi-structured interviews – Organisational Users

Industry classification
Organisations who utilise personality testing fell into the category of Banking and the service industry. Both organisations had less than 150 employees in Ireland, but in the UK and oversees employed in excess of 10,000 employees. Both organisations had a structured HR department with a span of control of 37 and 50.

Personality tools used
Company Y utilises Thomas International Disk System and Company X utilises SHL's OPQ32 personality questionnaire. In both organisations their HR managers were trained to level B.

Reliability & Validity
Both companies found the tools they use to be reliable and valid for their requirements. Company Y cited that personality tools are only reliable where a professional house is used, with trained and qualified individuals. Company Y also noted that OPQ and the 16PF are reliable tools and the MBTI is now outdated and

with a poor face validity. Company X found the OPQ to be more reliable than the Disk system and believes tests are only reliable and valid when used in conjunction with an additional selection method.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Company Y believes personality questionnaires offer a direction for discussion with a candidate and highlight area's to probe during the interview. The main weakness identified included poor test design, unqualified administrators and lack of feed back to candidates.

Company X believe questionnaires help in predicting how people react under pressure as this can not always be extracted during the interview. Weakness identified included inconsistency in completion of the questionnaire, poor management interpretation of results.

Other techniques

Company Y identified highly structured interview and assessment centres as additional selection tools. Company Y rated unstructured interviews and reference checks as ineffective and stated they did not trust references.

Company X identified competency based questions and assessment centres as additional selection tools. Company X also rated unstructured interviews and reference checks as ineffective

4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews – Non Organisational Users

Industry classification

Organisations who did not utilise personality testing fell into the category of Media and Education sector. Both organisations had more than 500 employees and only operated in Ireland. The organisations had no more two individuals working within the HR department.

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Current Selection tools

Company Z relies on structured interviews based around a six-factor formula (competencies) and reference checks. For management roles a competency application form by Pearn Kandola is also used.

Company Q relies on structured interviews and reference checking. A selection board carries out structured interviews.

Strengths & Weaknesses of existing selection tools

Company Z found that by structuring the interview both the candidate and the interviewer are at ease and this also ensures that all relevant questions are addressed. Weaknesses identified include candidate's ability to exaggerate their experience and reference checks yield only a little relevant information.

Company Q finds that interview panels are familiar with this structured process and require little training. The structure ensures adherence to the competencies of the role. Weaknesses identified includes, inflexibility of system and ability of candidates to manipulate and interpret the interview, denies any level of creativity during the interview, and reference checks are generic.

Other effective techniques

Company Z identified personality questionnaire followed by a structured interview as a preferred selection technique. They also noted that ability tests are not only effective but are fair.

Company Q would ideally like a combination of unstructured interviews, verbal reference checks and personality testing, however the management organisation structure is against change.

Knowledge of Personality Tools

Company Z completed course work on personality questionnaires and is most familiar with MBTI. The HR department is in favour of implementing personality questionnaires, but management are not convinced of the merits.

Company Q has previously used the MBTI and the 16PF and are now in the process of altering the selection techniques to include personality testing.

4.3.3 Focus Groups

The individuals who took part are identified by their initials only as part of this research project. The findings from this group discussion will be presented under the following headings:

Feedback and group dynamics

Each member of the group was working within a similar role and held a similar level position to that of their peers to ensure each member felt comfortable taking freely and openly about their experiences. On average each member of the group had completed a personality profile on three separate occasions. 50% of the group had previously received feedback in relation to their personality profile and the remainder had not. One group member had a particularly negative experience with a feedback session, the feedback given was poor, general and left the individual with a lot of questions and concerns about their own personality. The other group member who received feedback felt it was very relevant and helpful.

Purpose of personality tests completed by the group.

Out of a combined twelve completed personality tests, eight were used as a selection tool, one to identify suitable candidates for promotion, and three were completed as part of a college course.

Merits and Demerits of personality testing.

Overall, the group agreed with personality testing as a selection tool, and only one group member had a negative experience, namely an incomplete feedback session. The merits of testing, as agreed by the group were it is an accurate tool when completed by the respondent openly and honestly. Two of the group agreed that a personality profile could identify individual weaknesses, which is often useful and helpful to the candidate for future development. The main weaknesses the group associated with personality testing were in relation to inexperienced personnel administering, or giving feedback on results, and also the ability of candidates to falsify information.

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Relevance of personality testing as a selection tool

Half of the group (2 members) placed a 50% relevance level on personality testing, with the remaining group members responding with an 80% and 25% relevance level. Half of the group who placed a weight of 50% on personality testing, felt they should definitely not be used in isolation as a selection tool as individuals may not be honest and open. Furthermore those analysing the profile may not be qualified to do so. The group member who allocated 25% to the relevance of testing felt too many individuals today can manipulate tests so therefore should be used with caution. One group member placed a high relevance on personality testing, 80% due to a positive personal experience.

Factors affecting applicants responses

75% of the group believed that their particular mood on the day of completing the personality profile affected their responses. Half of the group admitted to completing answers they felt the organisation wanted to hear as opposed to admitting to their preferred working style, behaviour, way of thinking or feeling. Only one respondent stated that they always tried to complete the questions as accurately as possible, regardless of their mood or role.

Alternative Selection Techniques

The preferred selection tools of the group were assessment centres and reference checks. Assessment centres as it allowed the candidate to gain a feel for the role and also the organisation gained a greater insight into the ability of the candidate.

4.4   Triangulation Findings

Through out the course of the primary research one of the key findings was in relation to the effect of a negative feedback session or lack of feedback altogether. This finding emerged during a discussion with the focus group, where one member found the feedback she had received to be inconclusive and left her feeling despondent. This theme was also evident during the semi-structured interview with company Y, who stated that one of the main weaknesses to personality testing is the lack of feedback, and also feedback being delivered by unqualified personnel. This evidence was further backed up by questionnaires that were issued to individuals who stated that 55% of them had not received feedback after completing a personality questionnaire. Eight of the respondents cited lack of feedback or test results as a major concern they had in relation to testing.

A further trend that became evident throughout the research concerns the industry sectors that utilise personality testing as part of their selection process. The companies interviewed whom use personality testing fell into the category of financial services (banking) and a service provider. Questionnaires completed by organisations that use personality testing showed 29% of respondent organisations operated within the financial services sector. Questionnaires issued to non-organisational users of personality testing showed that a mere 4.5% of respondents operated within the financial services sector. This theme is further evident during a discussion with the focus group, where it emerged that out of seven personality profiles completed, four were on behalf of the financial service sector.

4.5   Key Research Findings

- Personality testing should not be used in isolation, but as one of a number of selection tools. Companies who took part in the semi-structured interviews and also organisations that completed online questionnaires supported this view.

- Structured interviews are the most common selection tool, 52% of organisations that use personality testing utilise this method as a selection tool also. 57% of organisations that do not use personality testing utilise structured interviews. 5% of organisations researched rely on reference checks.

- Through holding semi-structured interviews with organisations who utilise personality testing and issuing questionnaires, it has emerged that organisations have found a positive and effective selection tool in personality testing. 76% of organisations surveyed found they choose more appropriate candidates for the role since implementing personality testing. 63% of respondents believe personality predicts performance and have reported tests they have used to be reliable and valid.

4.6   Chapter Summary

This chapter investigated the findings of three research methods. It emerged that organisations that use personality testing believe it is an effective tool and has assisted them to choose the most appropriate candidates. Both organisations and candidates are quite open to the idea of personality testing.

CHAPTER 5   CONCLUSION

5.1   Chapter Overview

This chapter identifies the main limitations of the research undertaken, along with observations in relation to the findings. Alternative options to personality testing are explored and my personal view in relation to personality testing is discussed.

5.2   Limitations of Research

Suitability to the job is largely determined by the nature of the job and the responsibilities that are attached to it and how well the candidate's skills and knowledge match these requirements (Adkins et al.1994). The interviewer can determine the value of an interview according to Proctor (1997). Obtaining an accurate response depends largely on the interviewer and personal techniques are important. The interviewer must try at all times to create a relationship where the informant wants to pass on information. The interviewer should be well prepared with respect to their interviewing skills. (Brannick and Roche, 1997).

Another possible limitation is bias on the part of the interviewer. He or She must remain neutral at all times and be careful when using probing questions and the way they are handled. Another limitation may be due to the respondent's inability or lack of knowledge to answer correctly, or the interviewer may lead the interviewee to answer in a certain way.

With regard to the questionnaires it is possible that they were answered by a person other than that to whom it was addressed. For this reason they were distributed to persons known to the author (by personal email) to help ensure a high degree of response and also that only the person to whom it was intended would reply. Questionnaires are standardised so it is not possible to explain any points in the questions that participants might misinterpret. This was partially solved by piloting the questions on a small group of colleagues. As open-ended questions can generate large amounts of data that can take a long time to analyse open-ended questions were kept to a minimum. This may have restricted individuals whom had further ideas and thoughts in relation to a question. As a result of time constraints questionnaires were

limited to eleven, thirteen and fifteen questions. Again should further time have been available a larger sample population may have been contacted with further questions.

5.3   Alternative Options

Pearn Kandola Management Competency Application

Pearn Kandola is a specialist Occupational Psychology practice based in Dublin and the UK. On behalf of the Office For Health they researched management roles in the Office for Health and designed a management competency pack based on the key skills and competencies required for the role. Managers are asked to complete an application form prior to interview outlining in detail work experience relating to certain key competencies. They are also asked how they would carry out these roles better in the future. The interviewers are given an indicator report on responses that will lead to effective and less effective on the job performance. During the interview the interviewee is asked to elaborate on their application responses leading to a discuss in relation to their competencies. This selection and interviewing technique has also been utilised by company X in their selection of management roles. They have reported the tool to be extremely effective and have used it to successfully recruit over 15 middle and senior management personnel

5.4   The Authors View and Experience

After completing many personality questionnaires of type and trait theorists such as the OPQ, 16PF and Myers Briggs. My preference would lay with the trait theories, partly as I do not like to be labelled or pigeon holed to being a particular type of person, but also I felt the questions were not as relevant as the OPQ for instance. When I compared my personality profile from the OPQ and 16PF I could identify with it straight away, I would consider the Myres Briggs a little more confusing. People rebel against personality testing and therefore try and distort results this has been the case with two individuals who completed the OPQ32. Both were negative and judgmental in relation to the test from the beginning, they did not enjoy their personality type being known they scored their answers very quickly as a result both scored a rating of 2 when it came to consistency their profiles were considered void. Again a further individual I have encountered seemed perfect for a role in telesales he had 4 years experience and was very successful, the company interviewed him, checked references and offered him a role based on a successful personality test. His

personality was not what they deemed appropriate for the role. On further probing to the HR department it was established that the test was not valid as the questions in the test did not relate to a telesales role, but were geared towards a manager.

I believe as personality changes and is influenced by so many factors it should be monitored in relation to the appropriateness of an individual at any one time for a role. I strongly believe that personality questionnaires are only part of the solution to effective selection. They should not be used in isolation. From my experience I have found that personality questionnaires are useful as a probing tool during 2nd interviews. Areas of concern highlighted from the questionnaires can be examined more carefully during an in-depth discussion with the candidate. Reliability and Validity are key to a representative personality profile and also one that is fair

5.5   Conclusion and Future Recommendations

After investigating the effects of personality testing, I believe when used in conjunction with other selection tools personality testing is effective valid and reliable. Care must however be taken when choosing a test. Both primary and secondary research undertaken supports this finding.

The Chartered Institute of Professional Development recommends that tests be combined with other forms of assessment. They should be used as a guide rather than absolute cut off.

I concur with Dr. Finian Buckley, senior lecturer in work psychology at Dublin City University Business School. In a recent article in the Irish Independent cited that " psychometric testing can fall way short of the mark when overused and misused by employers asking the wrong questions and ultimately hiring the wrong person". (Irish Independent wed 3rd August 2005).

The majority of the researcher's findings are consistent with the literature review and also with my own personal experience as a level B qualified practitioner. Personality testing has proved to be a successful and effective tool in the selection and recruitment of staff. However a key finding of contrast emerged during the focus group, only one respondent who accounted for 25% of the group stated that they always completed the personality questionnaire as truthfully as possible and 50% of

the group admitted to "playing the game" or choosing answers they felt the organisation wanted to hear. A further area of contrast is the most frequently used personality instrument during my primary research proved to be Thomas DISC system and the 16PF, yet secondary research has shown that SHL's OPQ is the most widely and commonly used instrument in both the UK and Ireland.

I believe that SHL, the CIPD and the BPS are wholeheartedly correct when they state that feedback should only be given by qualified personnel as not only is incorrect or inadequate feedback damaging to the individual but also to the reliability and professionalism of the industry. I believe the test industry should be policed and regulated to an even further extent as so many tests are available on line with some offering in depth personality profiles after completing a mere 10 questions are nothing further than reading a horoscope.

I do not believe in or trust online testing and would strongly recommend that organisations intending to administer personality questionnaires do so face to face with the candidate. Although online testing has grown in popularity due to a reduction in cost and ease with which it can be administered, it can quite easily be faked or completed by an alternative candidate.

Litigation has not yet become an issue in Ireland, but as test use continues to increase so to will the possibility of litigation. There have been some cases of inequality and discrimination mostly in the UK. I also believe the EU need to regulate the industry and implement a uniform set of policies and procedures around testing to ensure standardisation. I would recommend that any organisation who uses personality testing as a selection technique should ensure that at least one member of the team is qualified to administer and give feedback on tests. Many organisations seem to overlook this fact leading to a very low feedback rate in general. A further recommendation would involve each organisation who administer tests to develop a test policy, this policy should include details such as policy for giving feedback, ensuring team members are adequately trained, policy for storing candidate information.

5.6   Observations and Issues with Personality Testing

- o   Only 60% of organisations surveyed who utilise personality testing are trained to either administer tests, give feedback or both.

- o   Individuals completing online personality questionnaires may be influenced in their responses by others who may be in their company at the time of completing the profile.

- o   Personality Questionnaires are becoming increasingly popular with more and more sales individuals as opposed to psychologists selling and explaining the concept.   Working on a commission basis the sales representatives may often make claims relating to the tests that exceed those claims made by the test designers. This can lead to a feeling that the tests are not adequate, reliable or suitable by the organisation. Company Y during the interview expressed this theory. I have also had experience of a non-trained individual selling a test beyond its ability.

- o   Personality questionnaires must be valid, an invalid questionnaire is unreliable. This was the case with the telesales candidate who completed an invalid test.

5.7   Future Research

After critically reviewing my approach and methodology to this research project I would alter a number of my approaches next time around.   In the first instance I would increase my sample population of organisations who use and do not use personality testing in order to gain a truer and more accurate picture of the testing environment in Ireland.   I would also endeavour to hold eight semi-structured interviews as opposed to four.   Although the focus group proved informative and relevant, I believe that a larger more diverse group of eight to ten members would yield more relevant data.   I would aim to become more proficient with a statistical analysis package in order to portray information and results to a greater extent.

5.8   Chapter Summary

Personality testing has proved to be an effective and useful selection tool. Qualified individuals should be the only members of the team to give feedback. Personality testing should not be used in isolation.

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APPENDIX 1   PERSONALITY THEORISTS

Myres Briggs Type Indicator

<div align="right">Table 1</div>

Extraverted Prefers to draw energy from the outer world of activity, people and things	*or*	*Introverted* Prefers to draw energy from the inner world of reflections, feelings and ideas
Sensing Prefers to focus on information gained from the five senses and on practical applications	*or*	*Intuitive* Prefers to focus on patterns, connections and possible meanings
Thinking Prefers to base decisions on logic and objective analysis of cause and effect	*or*	*Feeling* Prefers to base decisions on a valuing process, considering what is important to people
Judging Likes a planned, organised approach to life and prefers to have things decided	*or*	*Perceiving* Likes a flexible, spontaneous approach and prefers to keep options open

The Big 5 Factors
STABILITY FACTOR (N)

<div align="right">Table 2</div>

Four Facets of Need for Stability:	RESILIENT (R-)	RESPONSIVE (R=)	REACTIVE (R+)
Sensitiveness	At ease most of the time	Some concern from time to time	Worrying
Intensity	Usually calm	Occasionally heated	Quick to feel anger
Interpretation	Optimistic explanations	Realistic explanations	Pessimistic explanations
Rebound Time	Rapid rebound time	Moderate rebound time	Longer rebound time

EXTRAVERSION FACTOR (E)

Table 3

Six Facets of Extraversion :	INTROVERT (E-)	AMBIVERT (E=)	EXTRAVERT (E+)
Enthusiasm	Holds down positive feelings	Demonstrates some positive feelings	Shows a lot of positive feelings
Sociability	Prefers working alone	Occasionally seeks out others	Prefers working with others
Energy Mode	Prefers being still in one place	Maintains a moderate activity level	Prefers to be physically active
Taking Charge	Prefers being independent of others	Accepts some responsibility for others	Enjoys responsibility of leading others
Trust of Others	Skeptical of others	Is somewhat trusting	Readily trusts others
Tact	Speaks without regard for consequences	Exerts moderate care in selecting words	Carefully selects the right words

ORIGINALITY FACTOR (O)

Table 4

Four Facets of Originality:	PRESERVER (O-)	MODERATE (O=)	EXPLORER (O+)
Imagination	Implements plans	Creates and implements equally	Creates new plans and ideas
Complexity	Prefers simplicity	Balance of simplicity and complexity	Seeks complexity
Change	Wants to maintain existing methods	Is somewhat accepting of changes	Readily accepts changes and innovations
Scope	Attentive to details	Attends to details if needed	Prefers a broad view and resists details

ACCOMMODATION FACTOR (A)

<div align="right">Table 5</div>

Five Facets of Agreeableness:	CHALLENGER (A-)	NEGOTIATOR (A=)	ADAPTER (A+)
Service	More interested in self needs	Interested in needs of others and self	More interested in others' needs
Agreement	Welcomes engagement	Seeks resolution	Seeks harmony
Deference	Wants acknowledgement	Likes some acknowledgement	Uncomfortable with acknowledgement
Reserve	Usually expresses opinions	Expresses opinions somewhat	Keeps opinions to self
Reticence	Enjoys being out front	Wants some visibility	Prefers the background

Consolidation (C)

<div align="right">Table 6</div>

Five Facets of Consolidation:	FLEXIBLE (C-)	BALANCED (C=)	FOCUSED (C+)
Perfectionism	Low need to continually refine or polish	Occasional need to refine or polish	Continual need to refine or polish
Organization	Comfortable with little formal organization	Maintains some organization	Keeps everything organized
Drive	Satisfied with current level of achievement	Needs some additional achievement	Craves even more achievement
Concentration	Shifts easily between on-going tasks	Can shift between tasks before completion	Prefers completing tasks before shifting
Methodicalness	Operates in a more spontaneous mode	Does some planning	Develops plans for everything

APPENDIX 2 BACKGROUND & HISTORY TO PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

Kaplan and Saccuzzo 1997 describe how psychometric testing has risen and fallen through its short history. Prior to World War II and just after that period personality tests began to flourish. Researchers during this period began to scrutinise testing and analyse methods involved in testing and found fault with the process. As a result personality tests in the 30's and 40's went into decline. After World War II tests were altered and based on fewer different assumptions. During the 1930's and 1940's while structured personality questionnaires were still being investigated we saw the emergence of the projective Rorschach inkblot test. Murray and Morgan (1935) built on Rorschach theory of projective tests and developed the Thematic Apperception Test. A statistical procedure known as factor analysis emerged in the early 1940's. Factor Analysis was a method of identifying the minimum number of characters called factors to account for a large number of variables. Guilford initially developed the theory and by the late 1940's R.B. Cattell developed the theory further and introduced the 16PF Personality Factor, which as Kaplan and Saccuzzo (1997) describe as today one of the most well designed structured personality test.

As discussed in his book Psychology (Dworetzky 1994) states that the history of psychometrics can be dated back to 400 B C when attempts to measure differences between the psychological characteristics of individuals existed when Hippocrates attempted to define four basic temperament types each of which could be accounted for by a common body fluid or humour; blood - sanguine (optimistic), black bile - melancholic (depressed), yellow bile - choleric (irritable) and phlegm - phlegmatic (listless and sluggish). At this time Hippocrates attempted on numerous times to measure the differences between mental abilities none of these attempts were scientifically proven. The first attempt to scientifically measure the differences between individual mental abilities was made by Sir Francis Galton in the 19th Century who attempted to show and prove that the human mind could be organised and mapped into different dimensions. Galton studied and researched how people differed in terms of their ability to judge between various types of stimuli and by analysing the results he obtained he devised a system which would allow an

individual's abilities to be compared to those of others - an idea on which we rely heavily today.

French theorists such as Galton and Binet assisted to develop the theory that general human ability is composed of a specific number of abilities. A view that is still maintained today. SHL believe the most frequently used methods of assessing personality other than subjectively in interviews is the personality questionnaire or inventory.

Aiken L.R (1998) describes one of the first biblical examples of selection tests recorded in Judges 7:3-7. Here the Lord says to "Gideon you have too many men to for me to deliver midian into their hands. In order for Israel to save her strength turn back some of your men." Gideon told his men whoever was fearful to turn back, over twenty two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. The Lord declared that their was still too many men and requested that Gideon bring his men to the water, those who lap the water to drink should stay and those who cup the water to their mouths should go. 300 men lapped the water. Aiken suggests that this event signified that those men who lapped the water were more alert and wary than the other men and that those few men would be more adequate than a larger less wary fighting force.

APPENDIX 3   UK LITIGATION CASES

Plank v GNER Ltd

In the case of "Plank v GNER Ltd" October 2004 as outlined on the diversity UK training website a female employee applied to her employer to attend a training course to become a train driver. The selection process involved an interview leading to a psychometric test. A female candidate emerged as the best candidate at the end of the personal interviews with some 20 male applicants placed behind her, but failed the psychometric test. The employee obtained a grade 1 on the psychometric test but was not appointed. A number of successful male applicants achieved lower grade 2 results. The employee claimed to the employment tribunal that she was discriminated against based on the ground of sex. The tribunal upheld the complaint and found the employer's action amounted to direct sex discrimination. On appeal the finding was later quashed.

British Rail

In the mid 1990's British Rail, the London Borough of Brent and the Coventry Healthcare Trust were all involved in legal cases arising from the use of psychometric testing as a selection tool. The use of testing as a selection tool was perceived to discriminate against race (Diversity UK Training website). A case of racial discrimination was brought against British rail by 8 Asian guards who wanted to train to become train drivers. 6 white candidates and 19 Asian candidates completed the tests. As a result 4 white candidates were selected for training and none of the Asians were selected. The commission for Racial Equality investigated and found that 2 flaws existed in British Rails approach towards the tests. The first flaw found that the tests administered would not accurately predict if candidates would successfully complete driver training, the second flaw arose from a cultural difference to approach to work which put the Asian applicants at a distinct disadvantage. The Asians approach to work was to work slowly and accurately and on the aptitude tests they avoided guessing. The non native English speakers scored less on the verbal reasoning and comprehension tests due to greater difficulties with English vocabulary, although they are equally capable in a training environment. As a result of the above case British Rail has since reviewed its selection procedures to ensure they are valid and non discriminatory.

APPENDIX 4   CIPD SURVEY AND REPORT 2005

Table 7

Table 12: Selection methods most likely to be rated by participants as 'most effective'

Occupational group	1	2	3
Senior managers/directors	Structured interview (panel) (25%)	Competency-based interview (20%)	Interviews based on contents of CV/application form (19%)
Managers/professionals	Structured interview (panel) (24%)	Competency-based interview (23%)	Interviews based on contents of CV/application form (20%)
Administrative, secretarial and technical	Interview based on contents of CV/application form (33%)	Competency-based interview (21%)	Structured interview (panel) (17%)
Services (customer, personal, protective and sales)	Interviews based on contents of CV/application form (32%)	Competency-based interview (20%)	Structured interview (panel) (17%)
Manual/craft workers	Interviews based on contents of CV/application form (36%)	Structured interview (panel) (16%)	Competency-based interview (15%)

Table 8

Table 11: Methods used to select applicants (%)

	Total	Manufacturing and production	Voluntary, community and not-for-profit	Private sector services	Public services	2004 survey
Interviews following contents of CV/application form (ie biographical)	68	80	56	73	38	66
Competency-based interviews	58	56	40	61	59	62
Structured interview (panel)	56	45	84	45	87	55
Tests for specific skills	50	39	65	49	61	60
Structured interviews (one-to-one and critical incident/behavioural)	41	40	31	50	25	38
General ability tests	40	41	51	33	48	53
Literacy and/or numeracy tests	39	40	49	35	42	48
Personality questionnaires	36	37	35	38	31	46
Employment reference (pre-interview)	34	30	25	30	55	31
Assessment centres	34	25	38	37	41	43
Telephone interviews	30	25	16	45	13	26
Academic reference (pre-interview)	13	10	7	9	29	14
Online tests (selection/self-selection)	5	5	4	7	2	6
Other	2	2	2	3	1	6

APPENDIX 5   ARTICLES RELATING TO PERSONALITY TESTING

The test industry in the UK is reported to be worth £100 million (Florence, People Management 05) and is still growing. With the war on talent increasing and organisations striving to attract, select and retain the best people recruitment and selection has never been of such importance. Personality questionnaires are typically used to select staff into organisations; however there is more and more evidence to suggest organisations are also utilising personality questionnaires to identify individuals suitable for promotion. BP and Rolls Royce are just some of the organisations who use psychometric tools for succession planning (Hicks 05 People Management)

In an Article in 2002 by Patricia Delaney in the Sidney Morning Herald Newspaper, she described how psychometric tests provoke anxiety. Delaney wrote that while psychometric tests are gaining acceptance, particularly among younger workers who were required to sit them as part of graduate recruitment programs, there is still some resistance in the workplace.

Paul Sinnott, 27, a financial analyst, has worked for five big financial institutions. Three employers made him sit psychological tests; the other two relied on a series of interviews. But, he said, both methods told employers only part of the story. "The best tool for employers and employees is the three-month probation period. Doing the job is the only true indication of whether a person is suited to the role"

Cameron Francis managing director of Harbour Consulting Australia outlined to Delaney that he was finding more and more companies were utilising computerised testing and running their own screening in-house. Francis believes that tests could be misinterpreted if they were not valid or reliable and the tester did not understand the test of the job competencies. Francis also believes that recruitment decisions should not be based on psychological test results alone and the selection process should also include interviewing and reference checking.

In the Jan 05 edition of People Management Sappal reports on the changing use of personality questionnaires. The AC Milan football team have undergone detailed psychological profiling using SHL's occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ). The main reason for the team undergoing personality assessment is to identify what motivates each player, how they fit into the team, and also to estimate how they will react in certain situations. The AC Milan management team are utilising this information to strategically position players and also to identify players suitable to lead the team and step into the captain's shoes when required.

Alberg of PSL Consulting concurs with O'Dell Saville Consulting in his view that organisations now want more than just a personality questionnaire and are considering other factors such as how well will the tool they choose integrate into the company's HR system, and will they opt for a an online version with automated responses or will they obtain results from an expert over the phone.

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts with a turnover of over $27.6m has recently partnered with SHL to implement psychometric assessments to assist with successful hires. (SHL 2005) Krispy Kreme administered OPQ and customer service questionnaires to candidates. The result according to Edweena Stratton Krispy Kreme HR Director was extremely positive, candidates enjoyed receiving feedback and personality questionnaires were effective in assisting to select the most appropriate staff for the Krispy Kreme culture.

A recent article in the Irish Independent states "Irish Recruitment Consultants say up to 40% of medium-sized to large Irish companies psychometrically test job candidates as part of the interview process." It continues on to describe how Sean Howard MD for SHL, one of the worlds leading companies in psychometric testing describes the advantages of psychometric tests " psychometric tests evaluate how people are likely to behave and perform at work. It shows whether they are team players, detail conscience persuasive communicators, and rule following, domineering or controlling " Psychometric testing when used alongside interviews and cv's "reduces the odds of an employer picking the wrong candidate for the job these tests have been statistically proven to work". (Irish Independent wed 3rd August 2005)

APPENDIX 6   ANDREW JENKINS SURVEY 2001

Table 9

Table 8: Tests Commonly used by Employers		
Name of Test	Test Publisher	No of Employers Using
Personality		
Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ)	*SHL Group*	25
16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)	ASE	18
Personal Profile Analysis (PPA)		9
Belbin		3
Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation – Behaviour – (FIRO-B)	Oxford Psychologists Press	2
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)	Oxford Psychologists Press	2
Perception and Preference Inventory (PAPI)		2
Aptitude		
Management and Graduate Item Bank (MGIB)	SHL Group	10
Critical Reasoning Test Battery (CRTB)	Psytech and SHL Group	8
Personnel Test Battery (PTB)	SHL Group	8
Graduate and Managerial Assessment (GMA)	ASE	5
Technical Test Battery	SHL Group	5
Advanced Managerial Tests (AMT)	SHL Group	4
Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal		4
Automated Office Battery	SHL Group	3
General Ability Test	ASE	3
Information Technology Test Series	SHL Group	3
Applied Technology Test Series	SHL Group	2
Modern Occupational Skills Test (MOST)	ASE	2
AH4	ASE	2
AH6	ASE	2
Source: IRS, 1997; details of test publishers from IDS, 2000. These results indicate whether two or more organisations in the sample were using a particular test.		

APPENDIX 7   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & METHODS

Research Objectives

1. To ascertain the reasons behind the introduction of psychometric testing in the selection and recruitment process and also it's potential for identifying candidates for promotion and training.

2. To determine trends if any with regard to organisations that use personality testing as a means of evaluation.

3. To evaluate the recruitment and selection practices used within organisations as a whole.

4. To compare and contrast the findings within organisations that utilise psychometric testing as opposed to those organisations utilising various other techniques.

5. To demonstrate its long term cost effectiveness as a recruitment tool.

6. To evaluate its overall use in conjunction with other selection tools as a reliable and invaluable method of recruitment process as a whole.

7. To examine the general populations attitude and experiences with personality testing both from an administrators and applicants point of view.

8. To identify the pitfalls of various selection techniques, in particular personality testing both from an organisational and individual view.

An examination of these research objectives shows that some of these may be classed as exploratory and the remainder as descriptive.   Exploratory research provides information that will help to define problems and suggest hypotheses. (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong 2001).   It is used to investigate people's attitudes, opinions, motivations and behaviours.   Descriptive research on the other hand, is based on facts and figures and usually consists of quantitative techniques

Research Methods Tull & Hawkins (1993)

Table 10

Qualitative Methods	*or*	*Quantitative Methods*
o In-depth interviews		
o Structured interviews		o Questionnaires
o Semi-structured interviews		o Correlated Research
o Focus groups		o Experimental Research
o Case studies		

APPENDIX A   INTERVIEW 1 PERSONALITY TEST
USER

Criteria for selecting HR Manager for in depth interview

o The organisations must have a history of using personality testing as a selection technique and currently using same.

o Interviewee must have experience of or hold the position of HR Manager for a period exceeding 5 years.

o Interviewee must hold a certificate of competence to level B standard in psychological testing.

o Company must employ a minimum of 15 full time employees

o Company must be in operation in Ireland over 5 years

Transcription of In-depth Interview with company Y- who currently use personality questionnaires as a selection tool.

Purpose of Interview: To gain a further insight into the thoughts, concerns, merits and experiences of a company that utilises personality testing.

Date of Interview   26th April 2005

Company   Y

Interviewee   PC – Senior HR Manager

Question 1   Do you currently use personality testing as a selection tool, and if so please elaborate?

Response   Yes, we currently use Thomas International's online personality profile system for all of our sales roles. Our HR department in the UK have checked the reliability and validity of the test in relation to the role and have found it to be appropriate and satisfactory. Prior to using Thomas International we used a test known as Pasat.

Question 2   What industry sector do you operate within?

Response   Banking

Question 3 How many employees do you currently have, and how many work within the HR department? How many years experience do you have within HR management.

Response We have a total of 1100 employees through out the UK and Ireland. We have 30 people working in the HR team this includes a payroll team. We have over 11,000 employees throughout Europe and the USA. I have over 14 years HR experience, 8 of which were within management.

Question 4 How long has your organisation been using personality questionnaires?

Response For about 5 years,

Question 5 Are you trained / qualified to administer tests or give feedback to candidates?

Response Yes, I am level B qualified

Question 6 Do you consider personality questionnaires to be reliable and valid. Can you expand on your answer?

Response Yes, they can be reliable and valid but only in certain circumstances. I believe the individual administering the test must be qualified and also must be qualified to give feedback. If you go to a professional house their tests are normally reliable but some of the tests available at the moment are not reliable and the profiles they offer to individuals are as worthwhile as reading your horoscope. I believe the OPQ and the 16PF are reliable, although I have no preference towards trait or type personality profiles. I do not believe the Myres Briggs Type indicator is as useful as it could be. It needs to be updated and has fallen face validity. It looks old and is something I would not use. Even Belbin team types have evolved but the MBTI has remained relatively unchanged. I normally look at the context, norms and face validity of a test. If the instrument looks fresh and relevant it means a lot to me. I believe that some of the instruments being released today are being pushed and developed by not psychologists and they are being led by business people seeking to make a profit. I believe that personality questionnaires can be an economy of help, but should not be used as a tool on their own. They should be used as a probing instrument.

Question 7 What would you consider the main strengths of personality questionnaires to be?

Response   I believe personality questionnaires offer hints at area's to probe that are of concern, and through proper feedback sessions you can get to have a much better discussion with your candidate. The personality feedback is direction for a discussion with a candidate

Question 8   What other methods of selection would you consider to be effective when selecting candidates?

Response   I would consider highly structured interviews by someone who is trained in interviewing and the pitfalls and positives of it. I would also consider a work trial or assessment centre if funds are available. I don't trust references

Question 9   What weight would you place on the following selection methods on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most important and effective technique?
Response

Personality Questionnaires	3
Structured Interviews	4
Unstructured Interviews	1
Reference checks	1
Assessment centres	5
Ability tests	4

I would place ability tests at a higher rate than personality questionnaires as they are not subjective.

Question 10 What type of personality assessment instrument do you find the most useful such as MBTI, OPQ, 16PF?

Response   I would consider the 16PF as the most reliable instrument; it is also the instrument I am most familiar with. I have not used the OPQ. Other instruments I have used are the Myres Briggs Type Indicator, Belbin Team Types, Rapid Personality Questionnaire.

Question 11   What would you consider the pitfalls to personality questionnaires to be?

Response   Poor quality instrument, a test that is poorly designed, tests that are poor in terms of access and ones that do not require training to be administered. Also test administrators who do not sign up to abide by a code of ethics. Lack of feedback is also a problem with questionnaires and can lead to the respondent feeling like a failure. Feedback that is given should only be given by a qualified member of staff as this can also have a negitative effect. I also do not agree with online testing as those completing the questionnaire can be influenced by others around them at the time or gain the input from others as to the correct response to give.

Question 12   How have candidates responded when you have given them feedback they did not agree with or they felt did not reflect their personality?

Response   Within my current organisation, none of the candidates who complete personality questionnaires are given feedback, but in a previous organisation I always gave feedback to applicant and they normally were appreciative of the feedback, as the feedback was in a discussionary manner rather than directive manner.

Question 13   What is your overall opinion of personality questionnaires?

Response   Personality questionnaires can be useful and effective and a good instrument when used by an appropriate person with appropriate care. I also believe they should be used in conjunction with another form of selection.

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW 2 PERSONALITY TEST USER

Transcription of In-depth Interview with company X- who currently use personality questionnaires as a selection tool.

Purpose of Interview: To gain a further insight into the thoughts, concerns, merits and experiences of a company that utilises personality testing.

Date of Interview   28th April 2005
Company   X
Interviewee   BL – HR Manager

Question 1   Do you currently use personality testing as a selection tool, and if so please elaborate?

Response   Yes, we have been using SHL's OPQ 32 for the past 2 years. The majortiy of staff who are recruited within the client servicing, team leader roles, and finance sector must complete an OPQ personality questionnaire. For other roles such as data entry we normally require candidates to complete an ability test. We did look at other personality tools such as Thomas International DISC system but I found the OPQ took into account a larger number of personality traits, 32. As far as I am aware from my own personal research the OPQ is one of the most reliable tools.

Question 2   What industry sector do you operate within

Response   The service industry

Question 3   How many employees do you currently have, and how many work within the HR department. How many years experience do you have within HR management.

Response   We have over 22,000 employees world-wide with 150 employees in Ireland. Presently the Irish HR department consists of 2 human resource administrators and myself HR Manager. I have been working as HR Manager for the past 5 years, and have previously worked within the HR field for 3 years.

Question 4   How long has your organisation been using personality questionnaires?

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Response For the past 24 months

Question 5 **Are you trained / qualified to administer tests or give feedback to candidates**

Response Yes I am level B trained

Question 6 Do you consider personality questionnaires to be reliable and valid. Can you expand on your answer?

Response Yes, I think they can be reliable and valid but only if they are used in conjunction with another selection method, and that respondents are being as open and honest as possible when answering questions.

Question 7 **What would you consider the main strengths of personality questionnaires to be**

Response I think that through personality questionnaires you can predict to a certain extent how people are going to react under pressure, and whether or not they are team players. I don't believe this type of information can be extracted from candidates at interview stage or through ability tests. Candidates can sometimes bluff their way through an interview, but it is more difficult to bluff a reliable and valid test.

Question 8 **What other methods of selection would you consider to be effective when selecting candidates**

Response Competency bases questions, assessment centres and case studies. Basically any type of the job test is a good predictor of future performance.

Question 9 **What weight would you place on the following selection methods on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the most important and effective technique.**

Response

Personality Questionnaires	3
Structured Interviews	4
Unstructured Interviews	1
Reference checks	1
Assessment centres	5
Ability tests	4

Question 10   What type of personality assessment instrument do you find the most useful such as MBTI, OPQ, 16PF

Response   I am most familiar with the OPQ and Myres Briggs type indicator. I think Myres Briggs seems to be more stable, and shows an underlying personality. I think the OPQ reflects your behaviour and how it may change to a greater extent. Such as if you are having a bad day and complete an OPQ your personality profile could show you to be quite irrational and not representative of your usual self

Question 11   What would you consider the pitfalls to personality questionnaires to be

Response   Inconsistency, people trying to play personality questionnaires and say what they feel is expected of them. Also manager's misinterpreting results. Another downfall is that personality questionnaires are not a one stop shop, they are only part of the solution or tool in selection

Question 12   How have candidates responded when you have given them feedback they did not agree with or they felt did not reflect their personality?

Response   So far candidates have not questioned their personality profile; I have had no negative instances when giving feedback.

Question 13   What is your overall opinion of personality questionnaires?

Response   Effective when used in conjunction with another selection tool

APPENDIX C INTERVIEW 3 NON PERSONALITY TEST USER

Criteria for selecting HR Manager for in depth interview

o   The organisations must have a history of using an alternative method of selection, as opposed to personality testing.

o   Interviewee must have experience of or hold the position of HR Manager for a period exceeding 5 years.

o   Interviewee must have suitable training in interviewing candidates.

o   Company must employ a minimum of 15 full time employees

o   Company must be in operation in Ireland over 5 years

Transcription of In-depth Interview with company Z- who do not use personality questionnaires as a selection tool.

Purpose of Interview: To gain a further insight into the thoughts, concerns, merits and experiences of a company that utilises an alternative method of selection.

Date of Interview   29th April 2005

Company   Z

Interviewee   LB – Group HR Manager

Question 1   Do you currently use personality testing as a selection tool?

Response   No

Question 2   How many employees do you currently employ?

Response   500

Question 3   What industry sector do you operate within?

Response   Media

Question 4   What method of selection do you currently use?

Response   Structured interview, our interview procedure is very structured we ask a typical set of questions to each candidate based on the role. When a candidate has completed their interview our panel of interviewers which usually consist of a line

manager and myself HR manager discuss the competency's of the individual in relation to the job specification. We use a 6 factor formula and list the 6 main competencies required for the role and rate the individual based on their responses during the interview on a scale of 1-3, 1 having basic skills, 2 intermediate and 3 advanced. In order for the individual to pass to the 2nd stage of interviewing they must score more than 8. The 1st round interview is normally to get an idea of their personality and if their personality fits our culture. The 2nd round interview is geared towards actual skills required for the role. We choose 6 main skills required for the role and following the procedure again. At the end of the 2nd round the candidate must score 15 or over. We then make our decision based on the highest scorer.

For all middle and senior management roles, we use a management competency application form designed by Pearn Kandola. This application form identifies 13 key competencies required by the manager to be successful in their role. They are asked to complete the application form prior to interview. The questions in the application form ask the candidates to explain in detail their experiences within particular work type situations and are also asked how they would improve or change their actions in the next instance. The form is issued to candidates 3 weeks prior to their interview. During the interview the candidate is asked to expand on their answers and this turns into a discussion in relation to their skills. We have found this to be extremely effective for the hiring of our managers since we began using this system 14 months ago.

Question 5   Are you familiar with personality questionnaires?

Response   Yes, I completed some course work on personality questionnaires during college and would be most familiar with the Myres Briggs Type Indicator.

Question 6   Have you ever considered using personality questionnaires as a selection instrument?

Response   Yes, I would be quite open to using personality questionnaires but my current organisation are against change and would much prefer the more traditional methods of selection such as a structured interview and reference check. I think personality does reflect job performance.

Question 7   On average how often would your organisation recruit new staff, how many candidates would your organisation typically interview to select a suitable candidate?

Response   We normally recruit 3 new employees each month, and on average would interview 4 candidates to fill one vacancy. In total we interview a total of 144 candidates per year.

Question 8   What would you see as the pitfalls of your current selection techniques?

Response   Apart from middle and senior managers I believe our structured interviews and reference check technique is not as effective as other methods. We have quite a large turnover of staff and often candidates tell you what you want to hear during the interview process and turn out to be unsuitable for the role. I think some candidates have a skill in interviewing techniques and can pull the wool over the interviewer's eyes. With regards to references, I have found that HR Managers generally give very little details in relation to candidates so it is very difficult to judge if they are a suitable candidate.

Question 9   What are the main strengths of your current selection technique?

Response   I find I have more control over the interview, and the candidate is more at ease if they feel there is structure to the interview. Also questions prepared ensure that all aspects of the competencies of the role are covered, if it was an unstructured interview there is the possibility of omitting to question the candidate about a particular topic or skill.

Question 10   What weight would you place on the following selection methods on a scale of 1-5. With 5 being the most important and effective technique?

Response

Personality Questionnaires	5
Structured Interviews	3
Unstructured Interviews	2
Reference checks	3
Assessment centres	3
Ability tests	5

I would use personality tests with another method as opposed to a sole technique for selection. I would still like to ask probing questions during an interview.

I placed a rating of 3 on a structured interview as I believe some candidates are good at telling you what you want to hear. I also believe some managers are biased and select candidates for a role if they have a similar personality to them selves. I would consider the halo effect a problem within our current organisation.

I placed a rating of 2 on unstructured interviews as I would not like to conduct an interview off guard, also you can not avail of the opportunity to ask the candidate all of the relevant questions as you may omit some important questions and become side tracked.

I placed a rating of 3 on reference checks, as I feel some employers hold back on comments in relation to a previous employee. Also information can be manipulated during a reference check.

I would place a rating of 3 on a test centre as some people do not perform well under a test scenario although they may perform quite well on the job. I also believe that test centres discriminate against those with disabilities such as people who are dyslexic.

I placed a rating of 5 on ability tests as I believe they are effective and fair and do not discrimaite against candidates. Also records may be kept on file for future reference.

Question 11 What additional technique would you like to see used within your organisation.

Response   I think a personality questionnaire initially and then a structured interview to follow. Areas of concern highlighted during the questionnaire could be addressed or discussed during the actual interview.

APPENDIX D INTERVIEW 4 NON PERSONALITY TEST USER

Transcription of In-depth Interview with company Q who do not use personality questionnaires as a selection tool.

Purpose of Interview: To gain a further insight into the thoughts, concerns, merits and experiences of a company that utilises an alternative method of selection.

Date of Interview   27th April 2005

Company   Q

Interviewee   SG – HR Manager

Question 1   Do you currently use personality testing as a selection tool
Response   No

Question 2   How many employees do you currently employ
Response   620

Question 3   What industry sector do you operate within
Response   Education

Question 4   What method of selection do you currently use
Response   Structured interview and reference checking.
A selection board has to be constructed for each role to be filled, it is constructed in accordance with department guidelines that have been agreed by management, unions and all stakeholders involved. The interviewing system can not be manipulated or altered in any way. A marking system is used based on three criteria which are all associated to the competencies of the role. Each member of the interview board completes a marking sheet for each candidate. A summary sheet is complied by the chairperson of the board. The candidate with the highest total overall is awarded the position. In the event of equal totals the chairperson initiates a discussion with a view to reaching a consensus if this fails all candidates are re interviewed with a different selection board. All candidates have access to their individual marks and comments. There is an inbuilt appeal system within this mechanism which allows a candidate to question the mark achieved under any of the three criteria. For senior management

roles a five person board is constructed and structured interviews and reference checks are rigorously applied. Candidates are marked against a set criteria consisting of three competencies linked to the role. There is no inbuilt appeal system and it is incumbernant on the chairperson that there is an outcome. Neither of the above selection techniques are considered completely satisfactory and psychometric testing is being investigated as a tool in the selection process, it will be the subject of discussion with unions and stakeholders.

Question 5   Are you familiar with personality questionnaires

Response   Yes, I have previously used Myres Briggs and the 16PF.

Question 6   Have you ever considered using personality questionnaires as a selection instrument

Response   Yes, I am in favour of personality tests

Question 7   On average how often would your organisation recruit new staff, how many candidates would your organisation typically interview to select a suitable candidate.

Response   Roughly about 6 people per month, we normally interview four candidates and select the most suitable and highest scoring candidate from the four candidates.

Question 8   What would you see as the pitfalls of your current selection techniques

Response   It is too rigid, it is also too easily interrupted and manipulated by the candidate, it also denies the selection board any level of creativity. Reference checks are beginning to become suspect; most organisations now appear to give a generic reference in order to avoid litigation or time consuming research.

Question 9   What are the main strengths of your current selection technique

Response   Well established and all interview panel members are familiar with the process, also candidates are comfortable with the process. The current structure ensures adherence to the competences of the role and it allows us to construct selection boards who do not have to be trained on how to interview.

Question 10 What weight would you place on the following selection methods on a scale of 1-5.With 5 being the most important and effective technique

Response

Personality Questionnaires	4
Structured Interviews	3
Unstructured Interviews	4
Reference checks	2
Assessment centres	3
Ability tests	4

I would place a high rating of 4 on unstructured interviews as I find them very useful in extracting additional information from candidates in relation to their overall work experience, attitude to work. When candidates are inflow it is possible to gain an insight into their true self. The interview becomes more of an intimate relationship between the interviewer and interviewee.

Question 11 What additional technique would you like to see used within your organisation.

Response   I would consider a combination of unstructured interviews, verbal reference checks and personality testing to be the most effective techniques, I am currently in the process of altering the organisations selection techniques to include personality testing and a less rigid interview and verbal reference.

APPENDIX E QUESTIONNAIRE A INDIVIDUAL USERS OF PERSONALITY TESTING

Criteria

The applicants who completed Questionnaire A all met the following set criterion:

- o Over 21 years of age
- o Third level qualifications
- o Actively seeking full time employment
- o Resident in Ireland
- o Native English speakers
- o The applicants had all applied to an agency, seeking work

See Questionnaire A overleaf

1) What Industry sector do you operate within

- Financial Services
- Manufacturing
- Service Provider
- IT
- FMCG
- Transport
- Communications
- Other (Please Specify):

2) How many employees do you currently employ

- 5- 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 - 150
- Other (Please Specify):

) Are you familiar with personality profiles or psychometric testing

- Yes
- No

) How long have you been using psychometric tests as a selection tool

- 1-12 months
- 1-2 years
- 2-4 years
- Other (Please Specify):

) Do you use psychometric tests in conjunction with other selection tools

- Structured Interview
- Unstructured Interview
- Reference check
- Ability tests
- On the job test
- Assessment centre
- Other (Please Specify):

) What were your main concerns if any when taking into account the outcome of the personality
rofile of various individuals

- Personality profile did not seem to reflect the individual at interview stage
- I was nervous about giving negative feedback
- I did not have any concerns
- Other (Please Specify):

) Since using psychometric tests have you found the selection of candidates you have chosen are
iore appropriate to your organisation

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please Specify):

Have you noticed any other changes in your organisation since you began using psychometric tests
ich as a lower turnover?

Other (Please Specify):

) What is your overall view of psychometric tests?

Other (Please Specify):

0) Do you plan to continue to use psychometric tests in the future, and what personality test are you urrently using?

Other (Please Specify):

1) Do you believe personality predicts performance?

Yes, personality predicts performance

No, personality does not predict performance

Other (Please Specify):

2) How would you rate personality tests as a selection tool please choose a rating between 1 and 5, 1 eing not suitable and 5 being most suitable

1

2

3

4

5

Other (Please Specify):

3) Have you received training with regard to the administration of personality tests.

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

14) Have you found personality tests to be reliable and valid.

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

5) What would you consider the downfalls to personality testing to be

Other (Please Specify):

APPENDIX F QUESTIONNAIRE B NON CLIENT USERS OF PERSONALITY TESTING

Criteria

The organisations that completed questionnaire B all met the following set criterion.

- o   All organisations employed more than 5 full time employees.
- o   All were based in Ireland
- o   Each organisation did not use personality testing as a selection tool
- o   All organisations were active in selecting and recruiting employees on a regular basis.
- o   All the organisations within the sample had a history of working with recruitment agencies to identify potential candidates.
- o   Each organisation was in operation over 5 years.

See Questionnaire B overleaf

Appendix F: Questionnaire C Non Client Users of Personality Testing

) What Industry sector does your company operate within

- Financial Services
- Communications
- Advertising / Media
- FMCG
- Service Provider
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Advisory Services
- Banking
- Other (Please Specify):

) How many employees do you currently have

- 5-50
- 50-100
- 100-150
- 150-200
- 200 -250
- Other (Please Specify):

) What Selection methods do you currently undertake when recruiting staff.

- Structured Interview (formal)
- Unstructured Interview (informal)
- Reference checks
- Ability tests
- Assessment centres
- Candidate referral
- Other (Please Specify):

) Would you sometimes consider that your current selection tools are not adequate enough for you to hoose the most appropriate candidate.

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

) Are you familiar with personality tests?

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

) Would you ever consider using personality tests within your organisation as a selection tool

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

) What is your overall opinion of personality tests

Other (Please Specify):

How much would you expect or be prepared to pay for each individual personality test.

Other (Please Specify):

What do you think is the most appropriate selection tool

Other (Please Specify): _____

0) Has your company ever used personality testing in the past, and if so why did they stop using this ɔrm of selection

___ Yes, we have used personality testing in the past
___ No, we have not used personality testing in the past
___ Please give details in other as to why you have stopped using tests
___ Other (Please Specify): _____

1) What type of problems have you incurred with selection in the past

___ Other (Please Specify): _____

2) What would you consider the advantages of personality testing to be

___ Other (Please Specify): _____

3) Do you believe personality testing is an ethical means of selection

___ Yes
___ No
___ Other (Please Specify): _____

ł) What would you consider the downfalls of personality testing to be

___ Other (Please Specify): _____

APPENDIX G QUESTIONNAIRE C CLIENT USERS OF PERSONALITY TESTING

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Criteria

The organisations who completed questionnaire C, all met the following set criterion:

- o   All organisations were Irish Based
- o   Each organisation was in operation for more than 5 years.
- o   All organisations employed more than 5 full time employees
- o   Each organisation had a vast experience of using personality testing as a selection tool
- o   Each organisation was affiliated to a recruitment agency to assist with identifying suitable candidates
- o   Each organisation contained a HR division

See Questionnaire C overleaf

pendix G: Questionnaire C Client Users of Personality Testing

1) What Industry sector do you operate within

- Financial Services
- Manufacturing
- Service Provider
- IT
- FMCG
- Transport
- Communications
- Other (Please Specify):

?) How many employees do you currently employ

- 5- 20
- 20 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 - 150
- Other (Please Specify):

) Are you familiar with personality profiles or psychometric testing

- Yes
- No

4) How long have you been using psychometric tests as a selection tool

1-12 months

1-2 years

2-4 years

Other (Please Specify):

5) Do you use psychometric tests in conjunction with other selection tools

Structured Interview

Unstructured Interview

Reference check

Ability tests

On the job test

Assessment centre

Other (Please Specify):

) What were your main concerns if any when taking into account the outcome of the personality rofile of various individuals

Personality profile did not seem to reflect the individual at interview stage

I was nervous about giving negative feedback

I did not have any concerns

Other (Please Specify):

) Since using psychometric tests have you found the selection of candidates you have chosen are ore appropriate to your organisation

Yes

No

Other (Please Specify):

3) Have you noticed any other changes in your organisation since you began using psychometric tests such as a lower turnover?

- Yes, our turnover rates have fallen
- Turnover has remained unchanged
- Other (Please Specify):

)) What is your overall view of psychometric tests?

- Other (Please Specify):

.0) Do you plan to continue to use psychometric tests in the future, and what personality test are you urrently using?

- Other (Please Specify):

1) Do you believe personality predicts performance?

- Yes, personality predicts performance
- No, personality does not predict performance
- Other (Please Specify):

2) How would you rate personality tests as a selection tool please choose a rating between 1 and 5, 1 eing not suitable and 5 being most suitable

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- Other (Please Specify):

13) Have you received training with regard to the administration of personality tests.

  Yes

  No

  Other (Please Specify):

14) Have you found personality tests to be reliable and valid.

  Yes

  No

  Other (Please Specify):

15) What would you consider the downfalls to personality testing to be

  Other (Please Specify):

APPENDIX H FOCUS GROUP

Criteria for selecting individual for Focus Group

- o   All candidates were over 25 years of age
- o   All candidates were Irish Citizens and had previously attended a minimum of 3 interviews in their working history.
- o   All candidates were in full time employment.
- o   All candidates were known to the author and were willing participants in the focus group.
- o   All candidates had previously completed a personality profile as part of a selection process.

Purpose of Focus Group

The purpose of this focus group is to gather information in relation to your own personal experiences, thoughts, views and concerns if any in relation to personality testing.

I will begin this focus group by explaining what personality testing briefly refers to. Personality testing forms part of psychometric testing which you may be familiar with. It measures an individual's preferred working style and method. An individual completes a serious of questions in relation to their preferred working style, way of thinking, feeling, and behaving. The answers from this questionnaire produce what is known as a personality profile. This profile is matched to the profile required by an organisation to suit a particular role. There are no right or wrong answers with personality testing, just the most appropriate. During this discussion I will be raising 10 questions; I would appreciate your honest and open opinions. Any additional comments you would like to make in relation to the subject are welcome. I would also like to reassure you that all of your identities will remain confidential.

Q1. How many times have you competed personality questionnaires in the past

Responses

GB: 3

EM: 2

LB: 4

Q2. What was the purpose of you completing the questionnaires, and what industry sector do you remember completing the questionnaires on behalf of.

Responses

GB: On 2 occasions I completed a personality profile as part of a selection process, and on 1 occasions for promotion within a role. I completed 2 questionnaires on behalf of the service sector for a recruitment agency.

EM: Both instances were part of the recruitment process for a role, one within banking and one within retail.

LB: My first experience with personality questionnaires was in college, the remaining 3 questionnaires were completed as part of a selection process for various roles. I completed 2 questionnaires for the financial services sector.

MR: My first 2 questionnaires were completed in college; I completed 1 questionnaire as part of the selection process for a role, the position was with a retail bank.

Q3. Would you consider any factors or conditions to have affected your responses during the completion of your questionnaire?

Response

GB: Yes, sometimes I gave answers that were dependant on my mood. I think this reflected my profile. I also would consider what answers the organisation is most likely seeking.

EM: I always adapted answers to the role and "played the game". I do believe that mood on that day may also affect answers given.

LB: My answers given have often depended on my circumstances that day, for instance if I was in a rush I might answer the questions very quickly, and in other

instances may have chosen alternative answers had I thought the question through more.

MR: I would have to say that on average I have also tried to be as honest and truthful as possible in my answering regardless of other factors such as my mood

Q4. Have you received feedback on questionnaires in the past?

Response

GB: Yes, on each occasion I have received feedback

EM: No

LB: No

MR: Yes, I received feedback in college and also during the selection process for a role

Q5. Did you find the feedback to be helpful, and did you find your personality profile was similar to your profile at work.

Response

GB: I have also found my personality profile to be very accurate and relevant. It has also highlighted areas that I need to concentrate on which is really helpful to me.

EM: I have not received feedback

LB: I have not received feedback

MR: I did not find the feedback very useful, it really just gave me the dimensions of my personality but did not go into any detail, or tell me anything about myself. I felt the feedback I was given could have been explained a lot better.

Q6. Have you had any negative instances with personality questionnaires?

Response

GB: No

EM: None

LB: No

MR: Yes, I completed a personality profile for a role which I thought I would be very suited to, and my profile suggested I was not a good fit, the feedback was very poor and the person giving the feedback very unhelpful. I was left confused and annoyed regarding the feedback.

Q7. What would you consider the merits and demerits of personality testing to be

Response

GB: I think it can sometimes lead to people giving false answers and therefore their profiles are not accurate, if people are honest and open about their preferences it can be quite good and effective. I believe from personal experience that it can highlight areas that you need to improve upon, which is quite helpful when attending interviews or when trying to develop additional skills.

EM: I think personality testing is much more useful and effective for junior staff, or graduates as they have not mastered the technique on how to pass a personality profile. Also it can highlight to more junior and inexperienced candidates areas they need to improve upon particularly if they have only begun their career. I see a downside to using testing on senior and more experienced candidates as I think they are able to falsify their responses to suit the role.

LB: I think overall personality testing is effective and very useful, but does not always give a true picture of the candidate if the answers are not completed truly or if the interrupter is not experienced or qualified.

MR: The main positive aspect of personality testing is it is easy and clear to complete and relatively quick. It is accurate when people are truthful but I would also have concerns that employers may be losing out on really good candidates if they only take the personality profile into account. From my own experience I think it is very negative and unprofessional when inadequate and incomplete feedback is given, I would have preferred none at all.

Q8. In your experience, what percentage of relevance do you think should be placed on personality testing as a selection tool?

Response

GB: 80%

EM: 25%

LB: 50%

MR: 50%

Q9. Can you expand on your answers to the relevance of personality testing as a selection tool?

Response

GB: I believe most applicants respond truthfully, and from my own experience and found the tests to be very accurate and relevant.

EM: At senior level, candidates are astute enough to manipulate tests I would therefore place a lower level of importance on the test.

LB: I think the tests are very good when they are used in conjunction with another method such as interviewing. The tests highlight areas that should be used for further probing or questioning during the interview. The tests give a good insight into the individual.

MR: I think the tests are quite effective but would definitely recommend that they are not used on their own, as the candidate may be having a bad day and complete answers they normally would not fill in. I would therefore place a rating of 50% on personality tests.

Q10. What other selection techniques would you consider to be accurate and effective and why.

Response

GB: I think assessment centres and presentations are quite good as it allows the candidate to express themselves

EM: I would favour structured interviews as I would prefer a more formal setting. I also think references are particularly good.

LB: I think assessment centres and a couple of hours on the job are quite good selection tools as it gives you an insight into what the job might entail.

MR: I would favour ability tests and reference checks.

APPENDIX I   FINDINGS A INDIVIDUAL USERS

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Results for: Individual Experience of Personality Testing

1) Have you completed a personality profile test in the past

	Percentage
Yes	58
No	42

2) Did you receive feedback on your personality profile

	Percentage
Yes	44.7
No	55.3

3) Did you subsequently get offered a role with the company you completed the personality profile on behalf of

	Percentage
Yes	26.1
No	10.9
profile on behalf of a	63
	Total responses:

4) If you were selected for a role in the past due to completing an appropriate personality profile do you now think you were

	Percentage
Yes	33.3
No	33.3
Other	33.3

5) Do you agree with personality profiles and testing

	Percentage
Yes	57.1
No	26.5
Other	16.3

6) Would you complete a personality profile to assist you find the right career

	Percentage
Yes	77.6
No	22.4
Other	0
	Total responses:

7) What has been your general experience with personality profiles

	Percentage
Positive	46.7
Negative	13.3
Other	40

8) Do you feel the whole area of psychometric testing is intrusive or helpful?

	Percentage
Helpful	65.3
Intrusive	12.2
Other	22.4

9) As an employer or manager would you consider issuing personality profiles to assist in the selection of the most suitable

	Percentage
Yes	62
No	28
Other	10

10) Have you had any experience using personality profiles as a tool for selection and if so what was the outcome

	Percentage
Positive outcome	35.3
Negative outcome	2.9
Other	61.8

11) Do you agree with personality testing

	Percentage
Yes	57.1
No	24.5
Other	18.4

12) If you have completed a personality profile did you find the results to be representative of your personality.

	Percentage
Yes	41
No	7.7
Other	51.3

13) What area of personality testing if any most concerns you.

	Percentage
None	63.3
Other	36.7

APPENDIX J FINDINGS B NON CLIENT USERS

Results for: Personality Testing - Non Client Users

1) What Industry sector does your company operate within

	Percentage
Financial Services	4.5
Communications	9.1
Advertising / Media	4.5
FMCG	9.1
Service Provider	22.7
Manufacturing	22.7
Construction	0
Advisory Services	4.5
Banking	0
Other	22.7

2) How many employees do you currently have

	Percentage
0-50	28.6
50-100	14.3
100-150	0
150-200	14.3
200-250	4.8
Other	38.1

3) What Selection methods do you currently undertake when recruiting staff.

	Percentage
(formal)	57.1
(informal)	9.5
Reference checks	4.8
Ability tests	0
Assessment centres	0
Candidate referral	4.8
Other	23.8

4) Would you sometimes consider that your current selection tools are not adequate enough for you to choose the most appropriate candidate.

	Percentage
Yes	90.5
No	9.5
Other	0

5) Are you familiar with personality tests?

	Percentage
Yes	90.5
No	9.5
Other	0

6) Would you ever consider using personality tests within your organisation as a selection tool

	Percentage
Yes	81
No	9.5
Other	9.5

7) What is your overall opinion of personality tests

	Percentage
Other	100

8) How much would you expect or be prepared to pay for each individual personality test.

	Percentage
Other	100

9) What do you think is the most appropriate selection tool

	Percentage
Other	100

10) Has your company ever used personality testing in the past, and if so why did they stop using this form of selection

	Percentage
personality testing in	4.8
personality testing in	85.7
other as to why you	0
Other	9.5

11) What type of problems have you incurred with selection in the past

	Percentage
Other	100

12) What would you consider the advantages of personality testing to be

	Percentage
Other	100

13) Do you believe personality testing is an ethical means of selection

	Percentage
Yes	70
No	5
Other	25

14) What would you consider the downfalls of personality testing to be

	Percentage
Other	100

APPENDIX K FINDINGS C CLIENT USERS

Results for: Personality Testing - Client Users

1) What Industry sector do you operate within

	Percentage
Financial Services	28.6
Manufacturing	9.5
Service Provider	19
IT	9.5
FMCG	4.8
Transport	4.8
Communications	0
Other	23.8

2) How many employees do you currently employ

	Percentage
0-50	42.9
20 - 50	4.8
50 - 100	9.5
100 - 150	14.3
Other	28.6

3) Are you familiar with personality profiles or psychometric testing

	Percentage
Yes	95.2
No	4.8
Other	0

4) How long have you been using psychometric tests as a selection tool

	Percentage
1-12 months	45
1-2 years	10
2-4 years	15
Other	30

5) Do you use psychometric tests in conjunction with other selection tools

	Percentage
Structured interview	52.4
Interview	0
Reference check	4.8
Ability tests	4.8
On the job test	0
Assessment centre	4.8
Other	33.3

6) What were your main concerns if any when taking into account the outcome of the personality profile of various individuals

	Percentage
not seem to reflect	21.1
giving negative	10.5
concerns	52.6
Other	15.8

7) Since using psychometric tests have you found the selection of candidates you have chosen are more appropriate to your organisation

	Percentage
Yes	76.2
No	14.3
Other	9.5

8) Have you noticed any other changes in your organisation since you began using psychometric tests such as a lower turnover?

	Percentage
rates have fallen	40
remained unchanged	40
Other	20

9) What is your overall view of psychometric tests?

	Percentage
Other	100

10) Do you plan to continue to use psychometric tests in the future, and what personality test are you currently using?

	Percentage
Other	100

11) Do you believe personality predicts performance?

	Percentage
predicts performance	63.2
not predict	15.8
Other	21.1

12) How would you rate personality tests as a selection tool please choose a rating between 1 and 5, 1 being not suitable and 5 being most suitable

	Percentage
1	0
2	10
3	40
4	45
5	0
Other	5

13) Have you received training with regard to the administration of personality tests.

	Percentage
Yes	60
No	35
Other	5

14) Have you found personality tests to be reliable and valid.

	Percentage
Yes	63.2
No	5.3
Other	31.6

15) What would you consider the downfalls to personality testing to be

	Percentage
Other	100