

PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS APPLICATIONS BY ALBANIAN HR MANAGERS

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Abstract

Human resources are already acknowledged for the contribution towards sustained competitive advantage, especially in today's rapidly changing environment (Barney, 1991), that's why Human Resources Management (HRM) practices should be based on techniques able to identify and use the personnel professional and personal competencies. Personal characteristics such as personality, are in the same time more intriguing and more difficult to measure and manage. Several workplace personality testing techniques are being applied by HR specialists to identify the "actual or future employee characteristics or traits – including how one looks, thinks, acts and feels – as a product of interacting genetic and environmental influences" (Kreitner, Kinicki, 2001). The results of personality test should assist HR specialists to take more effective decisions, but "even if these tests are quite popular, they have psychometric and conceptual deficiencies that require caution in their application" (Chase, 2008).

This paper aims to give a general overview of the most popular personality tests eventual application in HR decisions. Semi structured interviews were conducted with HRM professionals in companies operating in Albania to identify the application of personality test as tool for making decisions, the expected benefits and perceptions about the validity of these tests.

Keywords: personality test, human resource management, organizational behavior

JEL Classification: D230, M120, M190

1. Introduction

Individual differences are of great importance to understand the organizational behavior in the interpersonal, group and organizational level, so rather than limiting it, today's managers need to better understand and accommodate diversity. This is why in modern organizations, psychometric testing has become increasingly popular and a powerful HRM function tool and beyond, used particularly in job analysis, selection, team building, training and development, team building, career planning, performance appraisal, motivation, turnover analysis, job satisfaction assessment etc. (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001; Michael, 2003; Chase, 2008).

Most of personality tests are based on typologies and classify the ones who take the test into categories with easily distinguished personal characteristics. The simplicity and utility of these typological representations has increased the popularity

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these instruments, especially from HRM specialists and managerial positions. There is strong evidence (Fleming and Harris 2005; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2008) that employees behavior is vital especially in service sector where employees have a more frequent contact with customers and directly influence their (customers) perception about the service.

This paper addresses the issue of psychometric tests application in Albanian organizations and is organized as follows. In section 2 is provided the literature review regarding personality tests in general and a decision making tool. Proper implications are given as well. In section 3 is briefly explained the research methodology. In section 4 are presented the research findings. Finally, the concluding remarks are given in section 5.

2. Review of the literature

Psychometric testing includes a wide variety of tests used to measure individual characteristics such as intellectual ability tests (IQ) measuring dimensions such as numerical, verbal and diagrammatic reasoning, memory, inductive reasoning, speed of perception; psychomotor and mechanic ability tests; knowledge and skills testing; interest inventories; and personality tests aimed at measuring individuals' preferences for ways of behaving, thinking and feeling (Koli and Llaci, 2005).

A personality trait is a relatively stable psychological attribute of an individual that tends to direct behavior in a wide variety of situations. The measurement of traits assumes that a given trait is found in varying magnitudes or units (from possessing little of the trait to possessing a lot of the trait) in different individuals. The magnitude of a score is meaningful for comparisons among individuals on a particular trait. The trait is also assumed to be normally distributed continuous data with only a relatively small percentage of people scoring at the low or high extreme and most individuals falling around the midpoint of a distribution of test scores (Chase, 2008).

Each year tons of personality tests are administered in the workplace, schools, community groups, management workshops, counseling centers etc. as a tool to help people understand their own behavior as well as the behavior of others. But in spite of the popularity, these tests have many problems in their use and a large body of research suggests that the reliability and validity of these tests cannot be supported. (Pittenger, 2009)

2.1. Personality tests

Personality tests are instruments build to make us better understand who are we dealing with in the organization. Since personality is considered a combination of stable characteristics (McCrae cited by Kreitner and Kinicki, (2001), pp.145), based on the accurate personality tests results one can extend the awareness about the other and take more effective decisions. But choosing a personality test for hiring or other decisions can be just as tricky as choosing the right candidate for the job. Among the most popular personality tests used in the workplace, we can mention:

Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is absolutely among the most popular (over three million people a year complete the assessment (Michael, 2003)) and most

discussed personality tests based on the Jung theory of physiological type. Isabel Briggs Myers and her mother, Katherine Briggs developed the MBTI to make the Jungian theory more understandable and usable (Myers and McCaulley, 1998). Jung considers behavior as a subsystem of personality and one which can change as a result of inputs from, and interactions with, the external environment. Within this belief he highlights the influences of other people as having a significant impact on behavior (Higgs, 2001). Jung (1912/1971) describes psychological types in terms of two attitude types: *introversion (I)* and *extroversion (E)* (which relate to the characteristic focus of attention and flow of energy of an individual); and four function types categorized as rational (functions used to describe judgment and decision making) including *thinking (T)* and *feeling (F)*, or irrational (methods used to describe perception rather than decision) including *intuitive (I)* and *sensing (S)* – coming up with a total of eight personality profiles based on three dichotomies introversion/extroversion, thinking/feeling, and sensing/intuition. The Myers added a fourth pair to define an individual's interaction preferences as *judging (J)* or *perceiving (P)* postulating a total of 16 personality types. Because the MBTI is a theory of types, a person can have only one preference. Although it is possible for people to develop the complimentary style, the primary preference will always dominate the person's personality (Pittenger, 2009). MBTI represents a practical solution for HRM specialists because the whole package, including the manual, test booklets, answer sheets, and score keys, are professionally produced. (Boyle, 1995) Anyway, the test is not available to anyone, but to individuals who have completed short courses administration and interpretation of the MBTI or licensed counselors and psychologists, to college instructors and personnel who had graduate training in the theory of testing.

Big Five factor model posits that personalities can be gauged in terms of “traits”, or dimensions used to categorize people according to degree to which they exhibit a characteristic. A short list of personality dimensions is distilled from a longer list of dimensions, composed by: (i) extraversion (e.g. assertive, outgoing, sociable, sense of energy, excitement); (ii) agreeableness (e.g. good-natured, cooperative, trusting); (iii) conscientiousness (e.g. dependable, responsible, achievement oriented, persistent); (iv) emotional stability (relaxed, secure, unworried); and (v) openness to experience (e.g. artistic, imaginative, curious, broad minded) (Barrick, Mount, 1993; Thoms, Moore, Scott, 1996). Standardized personality test determine how positively or negatively a person scores on each of these dimensions (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001).

DISC Theory – DISC has its origins in the early 1920s when psychologist William Moulton Martson (1893/1947)) developed a theory of four emotional responses – *dominance, influence, steadiness* and *compliance*. The DISC concept recognizes that we all are a blend of the four basic personality types, and we can adapt to certain situations (Barbian, 2001). “DISC questionnaire will provide three or even four different profiles, relating to different aspects of the personality. The *Internal* profile describes a person's 'inner' personality style, the type of behavior that can be expected when they feel completely at ease (or strong stress) and tends to remain more constant over time than the other profile types. *External* profile describes the style of personality that an individual feels is appropriate to their current circumstances. It changes considerably over time, as a person's situation and environment changes.

The *Summary* profile combines information from the other two to present a view of a person's actual behavior. Finally, a *Shift* profile summarizes the differences between the Internal and External profiles, highlighting the adaptations an individual is making to meet the perceived needs of their environment. This can be of particular interest in assessing an individual's perception of their role.” (Roodt, 1997)

Personal Profile is similar to MBTI and outlines four basic personality styles: dominance, influencing, steadiness and conscientiousness. These styles are based on two continua (i) task oriented – people oriented; and (ii) fast paced verbal people – slower paced reserved types. (for example: dominant types are fast paced and task oriented, whereas steady types are slower paced and people oriented).

Predictive Index is similar to MBTI and personal profile, but it differs in that it offers “infinite variety” and “a lot more detail” in describing the user's personality. This test is based on four continua indicating whether the user tends to be: a dominant person or a team player; socially oriented, with a preference for working “with and through people” or introspective with a preference for working alone; a “patient stable” person who likes consistency, or an “impatient” who thrives on variety; or a person who needs structure and likes to have clear directions, or a “winning it” type of person who values independence.

California Psychological Inventory – measures standard behavior and takes many of its questions from Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.

Caliper Profile – a 186 question test that provides a complete assessment of an individual's motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. Primarily for management, supervisory and sales positions.

FIRO-B - an indicator of interpersonal style used to help people better understand themselves and their relationship with others. Interpersonal relationships can be assessed part-way through a coaching process. This test explains how three personal needs (need for inclusion, control, and affection) affect various interpersonal relations. This test measures the extent to which each need is expressed (e.g., whether an individual will initiate the behavior) and wanted (e.g., whether the individual prefers to be the recipient of behavior)

16 PF-5 - looks at the whole person and their personality across 16 dimensions, which are further grouped into five global factors. It is useful in high-level coaching and helps people to look at aspects of themselves outside work that might affect their ability to focus.

Thomas Killman Conflict Instrument (TKI) - is about how a person deals with conflict and looks at what you are doing in terms of conflict and whether this is for good reason or entrenched habits.

2.2. Personality test as decision making tools (in HR)

Apart from the didactic purpose of better understanding the human nature, personality tests can be applied to take different personal and managerial decisions. Below are some of the personality test applications in human resources functions decision making, which is also the focus of this research. Furthermore, taking the

assessments is not enough - the organization has to use what emerges to change policies and behaviors where necessary.

According to Chicago Tribune Distributed by Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News in 2005, psychological testing has gained sway at an estimated 40 percent of large U.S. companies, evaluating everyone from hourly employees to top executives, experts say. Businesses such as fast-food giant McDonald's Corp. swear by predictive tests, saying they reduce turnover and boost productivity and sales. Companies spend \$400 million annually on employment tests of all kinds.

Among the most frequent use of personality test by the HR department is *selection*. More and more businesses now employ more sophisticated methods to determine who will be the best fit for their organization. Amid with curriculum vitae screening, interviews, competency tests, the assessment centers and role-play exercises, psychometric questionnaires designed to paint a picture of the personality, preferences and emotional intelligence of new applicants continue to be used (English, 2007, Perotin, 2001). Society for Human Resource Management's survey conducted in 2000 found that 22% of companies in USA used them. Certainly the goal is to employ the suitable people in the right position and identify the ones that suit with the company culture. Personality test such as MBTI and Big Five are applied by many companies in almost all positions in order to identify everyone's profile and better suit with the job positions. Getting to know the employees also helps managers to understand and better communicate with employees and colleagues (Biederman, 2001). Perriatt et al., (2007) found a relationship between personality traits and customer orientation using the five-factor model (conscientiousness and extraversion were the strongest predictors of the customer orientation of managers).

Carried out by individuals or companies, personality tests can be a crucial tool in *career choices*. (Myers, 1985, Perotin, 2001). "An early psychometric assessment can help people to understand what working environment would suit them best - whilst providing employers with an idea of which roles would play to their natural strengths" (English, 2007). MBTI for example is used to assesses preferences and generates a list of occupations with the highest and lowest percentage matching a particular type. If these tests are used as guides for candidate placements, can avoid putting someone with a preference for a dynamic workplace and social interaction, in a position where he/she has to work alone on routine tasks. If we take the personality tests validity for granted (validity will be explained later on the material), companies using these tests ensure the employees motivation and decrease turnover (Perotin, 2001).

Even if selection decisions is the typically and common use of these psychometrics, most of organizations miss out on the questionnaires' full potential and put the psychometrics to one side. "Psychometrics, such as the MBTI or the 16PF assessment, can and should be used throughout an employee's entire working life" (English, 2007). Since personality is considered a quite stable personal characteristic ,the assessment carried out at selection or early on, represents an

important record for the employee and can continue to play a vital part in his/her development and progression through the ranks. E.g. if someone has been promoted to their first management role (from a technical specialist position), the demands facing team leaders and line managers are new and vastly different, requiring self-awareness and the requisite willingness to change perceptive differences. Using continuously the information taken from personality tests gives to the companies an advantage because of better management of recruitment and selection costs (most of these tests are not for free). Also by comprehending the psychological contract, these companies have an invaluable tool in the war for talent.

There is a widely accepted benefit of personality tests application for *team building and team management* (Micheal, 2003) because personality plays a huge role in determining how well people will fit into a team and personality tests can help managers tailor job roles to engage and retain their employees top talent. (English, 2007) declares that “psychometric questionnaires also have value in determining why a given team does or doesn't work and why a leader's 'hands-off' management style may be great to some and awful to others.” MBTI, one of the most frequent used tests, from a team perspective, should help to (i) understand more about working style and identify how to develop these to be more effective; (ii) increase awareness of the team working style and thus improve communication, problem-solving and decision making, encourage appreciation of diversity and resolve conflict; (iii) understand why people react differently to change and how to support them through the process; (iv) help people understand how to communicate effectively and with different people and develop influencing and persuading skills (Willock, 2006).

There is also proved relationship between relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and self-efficacy for participating in self-managed work groups. Research shows that “neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness are significantly related to self-efficacy for participating in self-managed work groups” (Thoms, Moore, Scott, 1996). This is why organizations should consult personality tests when taking work organizations decisions such as whether or not to implement self-managed work groups or who should be selected to work in this type of structure. MBTI is an effective tool for developing strategies to manage the differences so that teams can function as high performers (Recar 2001).

There are many researchers believing that personality tests main goal is employee *training and development*. The identification of personality type helps in learning specifics about the employee training needs in organizations avoiding the one fit all training and enable to tailor training program and learning style to individual needs. It can also help for personal development. Once a person has taken the MBTI and discussed the results with a specially trained MBTI consultant, he/she can use the information gained to more effectively target areas for professional growth (Vogt and Peter, 1997; English, 2007). According to Michael (2003), MBTI is used in leadership development programs, where the workshop participants learn about the fundamentals of type theory – what are their types, identify their dominant

and least developed functions, and appreciate type diversity so that different types can work more effectively together, but no relationship was proved between leadership style and type.

There is a strong evidence on the literature that gender and personality profiles are related. Reynolds (2007) in her attempt to study the differences in negotiation skills between males and females caused by personality differences, discovered that even if two-thirds of men score highly as thinkers in MBTI, and two-thirds of women score highly as feelers, both men and women have other complementary skills which combined with the personality type result in almost equally effective negotiators.

Among the personality test applications is also *conflict resolution* by individuals take tests and are aware for their colleagues differences and are encouraged to think about the way one interacts with others and the impact of their style on the way they lead others, cope with change and communicate with their colleagues. The user judges himself/herself on the competencies, as do the user's subordinates, peers and immediate supervisor, than observes the gap between your perceptions and the perceptions of others. It doesn't matter who you think you are, because it's the perceptions of others that rule. This way personality tests help to get to know how others see you and identify the disadvantages impossible to recognize by yourself.

Even if personality tests might seem a great solution for many HRM decisions, using these tests alone (most of this rationale is based on MBTI research), provides an incomplete picture of managerial behavior. There is an enormous amount of management styles that go beyond the sixteen types because of the interaction of needs and personality types, that's why personality assessment is not enough (Michael, 2003).

Personality tests result management is not only a HR department responsibility. Line managers should also properly understand and take benefits of it to orient in taking decisions. Micheal suggests the application of MBTI in management development, decision making (Micheal, 2003). Southwest uses the personality assessments as a diagnostic tool to help employees identify how obstacles, stress, and potential conflict may arise, to help leaders and teams by providing them with communication tools, recognize and celebrate their differences, achieve better results and build trust (Weinstein, 2008).

2.3. Implications about personality tests

Almost all researchers of psychology and organizational behavior agree that personality affects the individual, group and organizational behavior. As widely explained above, in HRM context, personality testing is a tool for making decisions about hiring, training, promotion etc. But are we sure that the instruments we refer to (personality tests such as Big five, MBTI etc.) measure accurately this crucial individual characteristic?

Validity - The evidence of the validity (of criteria and construct) and reliability of personality tests (mainly of MBTI) is mixed at best, and should make users apply this

instrument with caution (Michael, 2003). Personality testing in the workplace, are questionable for two main reasons: predictive and differential validity (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001). These authors literature review reveals that most widely used personality tests such as Big Five and MMPI etc., historically have been poor predictors of job performance, and the differential validity relative to race is discussable, that's why personality tests should be used with caution. In a study comparing information technology professionals using the MBTI against an information technology competency test (Livingood, 2003), no significant correlation was found between any personality type profile and competency scores.

Reliability - Reliability refers to the consistency in measurement of a test. Tests that are highly reliable are preferred because one can get the same result each time measured the same thing. If the test is not reliable, we do not know if the changes in the score are due to changes in the person we are measuring or to some type of error in the testing process. It is important for the personality tests to be extremely reliable for many reasons since the type is a stable characteristic and doesn't change throughout the life. It resulted from a "test-retest" reliability testing that even when the test-retest interval is short (e.g., 5 weeks), as many as 50 percent of the people will be classified into a different type when applying MBTI (Pettinger, 1993). There is a vast literature and meta analyses proving that personality can change over the course of a person's life, particularly if age at first measurement is low or over 50, if the retest interval is large, if individual personality are considered, and if personality aspects other than big five traits are assessed (Ardelt, 2000). The reliability data of the MBTI bring into question the stability of the test.

Utility - Unfortunately, even though personality tests are very useful for understanding certain personality dimensions, human personality is too complex to be captured in a single conceptual scheme and requires multiple perspectives (Chase, 2008). For example, although MBTI does appear to measure several common personality traits, the patterns of data do not suggest that there is reason to believe that there are 16 unique types of personality reliable or valid predictors of behavior (Pittenger, 2009).

The primary questions that should be addressed are whether these aspects of the test are unique or represent more general constructions of personality and whether other methods of personality assessment afford more accurate predictions (Pittenger, 2009). This is known also as Forer effect where an individual gives a high rating to a positive description that supposedly applies specifically to them because the terminology is so vague as to allow any kind of behavior to fit any personality type.

Personality testing are incorporated into traditional approach to personnel selection and make this process more complicated than it would appear. In their attempt to identify problems and issues in the personality tests application in typical selection practices, Arthur, Woehr and Graziano (2000) discovered that: (i) there is a weak obtained relationship between personality variables and job performance; (ii) self-selection and choices about situations involving personality could be more difficult to recognize and anticipate a priori than are corresponding choices involving

ability; (iii) even if it proved that the complexity of personality structure is an integrated adoption of many diverse elements, complex models of personality structures may be more attractive to academics than to applied professionals, because these precise models will be nearly impossible to use in applied settings; (iv) psychological test can be biased due to the test instructor or the test taker social desirability impression management; (v) in order to avoid legal restrictions (discrimination) one should use measures of normal personality instead of those developed for clinical and diagnostic purposes.

2.4. Relationship between Personality Tests and Emotional Intelligence

Another concern that raises the question of validity is consistency (or not) between personality tests results and Emotional Intelligence (EI). EI includes “abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope” (Goleman, 1995 cited by Kreitner and Kinicki 2001, pp.158). MBTI considers introversion and extraversion attitude as mutually exclusive dimensions, while not everyone is either extraverted or introverted, and these dimensions should be considered traits of character, but rather mechanisms that an individual can switch on or off according to the situation (Jung, 1923/1971, pp.201). Also there is little evidence to substantiate the notion that everyone has a particular type. People can fall into a middle ground which may appear when a preference for a function or attitude is slight (Michael, 2003).

Higgs (2001), in his literature review and field research covering 177 managers, identified a relationship between MBTI and EI (strong positive relationship between the MBTI dominant function of intuition, and strong negative relationship with sensing), but not a strong or comprehensive one. The positively established relationship with influence falls within the developable elements (MBTI intuition and extraversion with EI elements). MBTI can be helpful to be used as an element of a development process, which will support the development of managers EI, focusing on developing behaviors related to their less dominant functions.

2.5. Culture implications in Personality Testing

There has been severe criticism of validity and reliability problems associated with a blind importation of Western instruments into non-Western countries. The assumption that personality traits are universally present across cultures is very doubtful. Also the importing of personality theories from US to other countries should be rejected because the measure and the relevant theory affect the development of a local theory (Chan, 2005). Another issue might be the translation and interpreting of personality tests in native languages in such a way to fully encompass the local reality associated with a concept. The complexity of this issue requires that personality assessment should be done by professionals with appropriate training and administered by individuals with proper knowledge in psychology.

3. Research methodology

Even if studying the personality testing and its implications in the workplace has received attention from various researchers all over the world, Albania lacks of studies focusing on personality testing as a decision making tool in various management decisions. This article aims to discover and analyze the application of personality tests in companies operating in Albania and understand more not only about the proved implications but also for the perceptions managers have about these technique application.

The author goal was to mostly identify if: (i) personality tests are applied in companies operating in Albania; (ii) which are the most wide spread personality tests used; (iii) how personality test results are managed the to take decisions about HRM; (iv) what are the expected benefits and the perceived validity of these tests by HRM.

An understanding of the situation was enabled by the results achieved by the qualitative semi structured interview. In order to provide a good basis for analyzing, the authors reviewed research articles mainly retrieved online by academic databases such as Jstore, Ebscohost, Academic Search Premier, Emerald etc. and book chapters in organizational behavior, human resources management and psychology etc. The researchers also used several data of the companies HRM manuals and also different forms and templates (job descriptions, selection tests, interview format, performance evaluation form etc.) to identify if and how personal characteristics such as personality traits are use in HRM practices.

The interview (Appendix 1) was designed based on the literature review and aimed to answer the research questions. The interviews offered good qualitative insights on the data provided by the desk research. In order to analyze the application of personality tests in organizations operating in Albania, the researchers used a selective sample of 21 companies headquartered mainly in Tirana. Since personality tests are more emergent and visible in the service sector, all questionnaires were distributed in companies operating in this sector (telecommunication, banks, public administration, project management, not profit organizations etc.). There were no small and medium enterprises participating in the survey, assuming that these businesses don't have a well-structured unit dealing with human resource management and appropriate staff to apply and use personality testing.

The selected organizations for the survey have a special structure dealing with human resource management, 45% of them have a special HRM department or directory, 30% HRM structure is part of another unit, and 25% of the cases HRM activities are performed as additional tasks of a single managerial position. In the cases where there is a HRM department or special HRM structure, there is mostly a special position dealing with recruitment and selection which is more likely to apply the personality tests, that's why the researchers choose to interview this position or the HRM manager to increase the interview validity.

The list of questions was first distributed by email and filled electronically by HRM department staff members. Than an more detailed semi structured interview

followed with the companies which apply personality testing. Due to the short period the researchers had to distribute and collect data (October – November 2009), the response rate was 70%. The biggest limitation of the study is the small number of companies in our sample which applies personality testing, which prevents the researchers to make absolute generalizations, but rises the need for further research to identify the reason why these tests are not being used.

4. Research findings

From the companies included in the research, only a small percentage of 24% apply personality testing in the workplace. While almost 85% of the companies use competency tests and other job related tests. When used, the kind of personality test used varies. Only one company uses the Big Five, while most of the other companies use different personality tests. Are the company headquarters (since all the companies that use personality tests are branches, or subsidiaries of international companies) that identify and suggest which test to use. When asked about the period since the company is applying personality testing in the workplace, the responses were vague because most of the interviewed HR managers/specialists were new at the job and absent of this institutional memory. The personality tests are applied not for every position in the company but mainly for managerial positions (when asked in the in depth interview – this concerns the higher managerial level such as chiefs of departments and their managerial staff subordinates). The researchers could not identify special positions for which these tests are used for. In all the cases, personality and other psychometric results from the test, are filed to the employee records. The expected benefits by HR staff from these psychometrics is to better know the employees and predict any future decision or behavior.

If applied, psychological tests in general and particularly personality tests are used in all the cases for selection decisions. These tests are used together with other selection techniques and in most of the cases represent a particular percentage in overall candidate evaluation (for a new candidate or internal movement through promotion and transferring). The interviewed declared that used personality testing for career planning, but when asked about specifics of career planning, the researchers realized that only a small percentage (less than 10% - means only 2 companies) have well-built and clear career plans for their companies. These companies have also talent management programs but more than personality tests, use assessment centers to identify the most prominent candidates. The interviewed declare that psychometric data are used in teambuilding decisions to be sure that there is a diverse group according to their personality profile.

HR managers or specialist believe that psychological tests in general and particularly personality tests are important in HRM decision making. Even if they declare that had trainings for these tests, still believe that further professional training for them is needed to properly use and take advantage of these tests. The researchers were not able to retrieve historical information about the HRM practices before the application of personality testing – most of the time because the interviewed were new at the job, or because the company was young.

Among the most interesting findings of the research was that HRM specialists believe that their companies don't get the maximum from psychometric tests because none of them is in native language (English) and there are some ambiguous questions

for the Albanian cultural fit. All the interviewed are aware that these tests are important but should be used with caution and never as the single instrument for making decisions.

5. Conclusions

Personality tests are becoming an important instrument in the hand of HRM and other managers with the goal to better know and manage people in organization. The literature review showed that there are plenty of personality tests available for use and can be applied in selection decisions, career choice, training and development, team building and team management, conflict resolution etc. Even if the diversity management is widely accepted, these specific tools developed such as personality tests should be used with caution because the research shows that validity and reliability of these tests is often doubtful. The research carried in companies operating in Albania, revealed that psychometric tests in general and personality test in particular are not widely applied. In cases when used, their main purpose is the most primitive one, selection decisions, and in none of the cases was observed the employee development purpose (considered among the most important benefits of personality tests).

More than the perceived validity and tests utility, the researchers believe that this low percentage of companies applying personality tests is a predicted behavior of not developed HRM role in companies operating in Albania. Still the HRM role is considered an operational and not a staff department offering innovative solutions for talent management (this is an researchers assumption that should be proved with proper research). Finally the authors would like to emphasize the fact that this is a pioneer study and further research is needed to analyze the issue in detail and especially the reason why personality testing so widely used all over the world is in such an embryonic status in Albania.

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Appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONALITY TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE

Thank you for the time spending by participating in our research aiming to analyze the use of personality tests in the workplace. We ensure you that the researchers will keep the answers results private and the data taken from the questionnaire will be used for research purpose only. For further details regarding this research, you are invited to contact the authors: Blendi Gërdoçi, MBA (gblendi@yahoo.com; Sidita Dibra, MBA (s_dibra@yahoo.com)

Organization:

Number of employees

Your position in the company:.....

1. Which is the structure responsible for HRM in your Organization?

a. HRM department/directory; b. HRM sector

c. specialists positions in another department d. other

.....

Please describe the structure responsible for HRM.

.....
.....

2. What kind of tests do you use for human resources management decisions?

a. intelligence tests b. psychomotor and mechanic tests c. personality tests

d. psychological tests e. Ability (Competence/Skill) Tests f. other

3. What kind of psychological tests do you use in the workplace?

a. (MBTI) Myers Briggs Type Indicator b. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

c. The Big Five d. other

4. When did you begun the application of psychological tests?

.....

5. For which positions do you mainly apply psychological tests?

- a. strategic managers b. middle managers c. operational managers d. all managerial positions
e. all employees f. other

.....

6. Please mention some of the typical job positions for which you apply psychological tests.

.....

7. Do you document /file the psychological tests results? a. Yes b. No

If yes, how and why do you do that?

.....

8. Do you include psychometric characteristics as specifications in job descriptions? a. Yes b. No

If yes, what kind of psychometric characteristics do you include as specifications in job descriptions?

.....

9. Which are the expected benefits from the psychological test application in your company?

.....

10. Do you use the psychological tests results to take decisions about candidate selection? a. Yes b. No

If Yes, please explain how psychological tests results impact your decisions about candidate selection.

.....

If Yes, please explain how do you integrate psychological tests with other tests and techniques in selection.

.....

11. Do you use the psychological tests results to take decisions about career planning? a. Yes b. No

If Yes, please explain how psychological tests impact your decisions about career planning

.....

12. Do you use the psychological tests in training and development plans decisions? a. Yes b. No

If Yes, please explain how psychological tests impact your decisions about training and development.

.....

13. Do you use the psychological tests in team building? a. Yes b. No

If Yes, please explain how psychological tests help you to choose the team members for different projects.

.....

14. Do you include personality traits as performance evaluation criteria? a. Yes b. No

If Yes, please mention some of them

.....

What's the overall importance given to personality traits among other performance evaluation criteria?

.....

.....

15. Do you use the psychological tests in performance appraisal decisions? a. Yes b. No
If Yes, please explain how psychological tests help you in your employees performance evaluation.

.....

.....

16. Do you use the psychological tests results to take decisions about promotion or transferring?
a. Yes b. No
If Yes, please explain how psychological tests results impact your decisions about promotion/transferring.

.....

.....

17. Please mention and explain how your company applies psychological tests in/for other areas/reasons.

.....

.....

18. Based on your opinion as a HRM specialist/manager, do psychological test measure the employee characteristics required for a higher performance? Explain.

.....

.....

19. Which are some of the limitations that you think psychological test application has?

.....

.....

20. Have you received any training for using these psychological tests in the workplace? a. Yes b. No
If yes what kind of training did you receive?

.....

.....

If no, do you think it is necessary? What would you need to learn about?

.....

.....

21. Comparing with the previous period when psychological tests were not used, are you able to identify the benefits/difficulties of these tests in HRM issues decision making?

.....

.....

22. Did you adopt/modify the application of psychological test used during the years? a. Yes b. No
If Yes, why did you do that? Please explain

.....

.....

Were cultural differences one of the reasons to adopt/modify these test application? Explain.

.....

.....

23. Do have any additional comments about psychological test application in the workplace?

.....

.....

We would appreciate any supporting document (application form, interview evaluation form, performance appraisal form etc.) you can attach to this questionnaire.

Thank You!