



December 2012



Thinking Aloud

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Dear Reader,

In this age of data and analytics where organisations continually strive to understand the market (i.e., consumer minds) by studying vast amounts of data generated based on buying behavior, should organisations only focus on the external minds? I am confident that you will answer in unison, a big ' NO' , and here is where mapping of internal minds (i.e., employees) is one of the high ranking answers. The western world has been a major contributor to the field of psychometric testing, the study concerned with psychological measurement, and organisations have consumed these to recruit the ' right' people, choose the ' right' people for larger roles, based on their psychological evaluation, and so on. This month's ET focuses on the use of psychometrics in organisations and aims to provide information on the field which is slowly taking deeper roots in the Indian business landscape. But it is worthwhile to note that psychometrics, dealing with human behavior, has a much wider application. Hope you find this issue informative and useful.



Thinking Aloud this month features Salil Raghavan, Head – HR, GE Shipping Co. Ltd., our expert invitee this month, who writes about the various psychometrics instruments that are at the organisations disposal not only at the recruitment level, but also in the later stages of employment. He primarily introduces us to two types of tests i.e., preference based and trait based. But he cautions that psychometric tests should be used with due care as they are prone to be influenced by factors emanating from human behavior and thus he is of the view that these should be complemented with other evaluation methods as well. According to him, the internet too has had an impact on this field, with interactive dynamic questionnaires and real time assessment reports providing a further edge.

Podium this month features **Sushil Eapen**, Managing Director, Pearson Clinical and Talent Assessment, who talks to us about some practical nuances of psychometric testing. He opines that psychometric tests should be conducted

and administered only by or under the supervision of trained professionals and in turn they too should uphold highest standards and be entirely responsible for the report they generate. He tells us that it is essential to apply tests based on a clearly defined relation between the job profile and the personality type. Though almost all psychometric tests currently in use are western methods, he says that they can be fairly applied in the Indian context by ensuring cultural adaptation and standardisation. But he cautions that at the time of recruitment, psychometric tests in isolation should not be used to accept or reject a candidate. Also he tells us about Pearson's work with respect to school children and the various tests and teacher training programs available in that space.

In **We Recommend** this month, we share with you links to some videos on YouTube talking about psychometrics. There is a series of three videos featuring industry experts who talk about ' Psychometric test advice' . In addition to this, there are clips on ' Successful psychometric testing' and ' A guide to psychometric testing' . The selected videos with average play-time between five to seven minutes each provide insightful views on the field of psychometrics.

Standing Ovation this month features Tropical Research and Development Centre (TRDC), a Bangalore based NGO which aims at reducing poverty through education and conservation of natural resources for the future generation. Through education, skill development and conservation of natural resources, TRDC helps in improving the lives of children and women. TRDC conducts various activities under its two major programs, TRDC Paryavaran – focusing on environment, and TRDC Ashakiran – focusing on child rights and education. For its cause and the efforts, TRDC deserves a Standing Ovation!

In **Figures of Speech**, Vikram presents the use of psychometrics in ' personal' relations!

As always, we value your opinion, so do let us know how you liked this issue. To visit our previous issues you can visit the Resources section on the website or simply [Click Here](#). You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Linked In](#) & [Google+](#).



Thinking Aloud

Psychometrics to the aid of organisations by Salil Raghavan

Psychometric instruments, as they are today, are the outcome of many years of informal and formal efforts to assess personality and cognitive ability with the majority of the developments occurring in the twentieth century. The testing movement gained its psychological character with the publication of Charles Darwin's influential book, The Origin of Species. Francis Galton, Alfred Binet, Raymond Cattell, Gordon Allport, Carl Jung and Costa and McCrae are some of the eminent psychologists who contributed significantly to this field.

I am fortunate to have got exposure to a wide variety of psychometric instruments over the years. The first was MBTI: a popular and easy to interpret instrument, the tool is explained in a non-threatening and unbiased language.

Further, it is a flexible tool that can be used in a host of applications with much research and resource material available to back it. However, it cannot be used for recruitment and selection as it is based on preferences and not on trait. No wonder then, that it has survived eight decades of existence. The step II report is very detailed and in my organisation, GE Shipping, we have combined it with 360 degrees appraisal to provide a tremendous impact. If one is looking at introducing personality instruments to an organisation, there is no other better tool to get easy acceptance of users.

If one is looking at trait based instruments, there is a long list to choose from: Workplace Big 5 (also called WB5) based on the Big 5 factors, the good old 16PF from Cattell, CPI 260, OPQ 32, etc. WB5 and OPQ 32 are workplace-focused instruments. These can be used to aid recruitment, so long as you are clear about the ' Role Descriptors' and ' Essential Competencies' for the position. For selection, it is always better to use multiple lenses - use an IQ test to assess cognitive skills, add a psychometric tool to look at potential on the set of competencies applicable for the role, train the interview panel on Behavior Event Interview (BEI) method, etc. These steps in totality can definitely ensure a reduction in selection risks as using psychometrics can help to bring down cognitive biases of interviewers.

However, these instruments have to be used with care. For instance, while using psychometric instruments, one needs to know certain factors which can influence results – social desirability is one of them. Social desirability is a conscious or unconscious tendency, to present oneself in a favorable manner, in order to feel accepted by others. Fully aware that the test may be used as a parameter for selection, a candidate may tend to display this factor. Hence it is important to validate what has been reported in the test during the interview stage.

The internet has aided new development possibilities in the area of psychometrics. The questionnaire has become interactive and dynamic based on user response style and reports are available on a real time basis. Normative and Ipsative scales have been combined to provide higher reliability and validity. In my view, Saville Wave and Dimensions (from TalentQ) are two such next generation tools. These have been created by Peter Saville and Roger Holdsworth respectively, who together developed SHL OPQ 32 many years earlier.

How expensive are these tests? They start from Rs. 1,000 onwards and can go up to Rs. 10,000 or more depending on the level of detailing and interpretation. Considering that selecting the right candidate is a very important decision and also realising the potential damages/opportunity cost on account of a wrong hire, the cost can be justified. Currently a large number of organisations (including Siemens, Nomura, Maersk, British Gas, BP, Essar, etc.) use psychometric tools either for selection or development or team building.

Overall, in my considered opinion, I expect to see a lot of excitement in the Talent Analytics space in the coming years, and a consequent growth in the careful use of psychometric tools.

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Podium

Sushil Eapen, Managing Director, Pearson Clinical and Talent Assessment



Sushil Eapen, Managing Director, Pearson Clinical and Talent Assessment, was instrumental in setting up Pearson Assessment & Information's India operations.

With over 20 years of experience spanning various functions including marketing, finance and product development, he leads a dynamic cross-functional team of sales, marketing, finance, product development and customer relationship. He spearheads the company's growth strategies, hiring of key personnel and understanding customer requirements for various assessment products in both Clinical and Organisational settings.

Mr. Eapen is also the founder of Vega, a premium assessment content writing firm. He has also worked as a strategic alliance manager for Sara Lee and with Middleby Corporation in Chicago prior to Pearson.

Sushil, an MS from Kansas State University and an MBA from Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, has specialised in Marketing, Finance and International Business.

ET: Would you say that psychometric tools should be used only by trained psychologists and they become 'dangerous tools' in the hands of unlicensed practitioners?

SE: The results of psychometric instruments can have significant impact on the lives of test takers, and so only trained professionals should administer these tests and provide interpretation of the results. These professionals must use tests that they are trained to use, or work under close supervision of professionals with training and relevant experience. It is very important that they uphold the highest standards while administering these instruments and should take full responsibilities for the reports that they sign. Some of these tests are used to predict academic success or future employment performance. The results of these tests should be communicated only to the test taker due to the sensitive nature of the information being provided. Unskilled practitioners may use the tests inappropriately and may provide inaccurate interpretation of the results. This is why most test publishers insist on verifying the qualifications of those who show interest in purchasing these test instruments. In many countries there are guidelines that specify professional conduct of practitioners to ensure that they are competent and ethical. They also have regulatory bodies that govern the code and conduct for practicing in this field and providing psychometric assessment service, in order to protect the interest of the general public. They may also include disciplinary bodies that will use these guidelines to evaluate a professional's competency to administer a particular instrument.

ET: While there are certain standard psychometric tests that can be used in all the organisations, what challenges do the dynamism of human behaviour pose to the field of psychometric testing in organisations? Please share some examples if possible.

SE: It is very important for most organisations to find a good fit between the job profile and the personality of the candidates that are applying for the position. For example, Pearson's behavioural assessments like SOSIE and Golden Personality Type Profiler are now widely used by corporate customers across India. SOSIE is an excellent personality instrument that is used to identify the candidates that match closest to the job profile during recruitment. Golden will identify the Personality Type and it is used by Learning and Development professionals for team building. Employers are interested in finding out the employees' stress tolerance, self control, emotional resiliency, and ability to manage changes so that they can function as a cohesive team. Personality profiles are also important in career counselling, executive coaching, development of future leaders and team building. As far as general abilities are concerned, many companies have reported that it is no longer enough to understand the basic reasoning abilities of candidates, but they are also interested in understanding the learnability as well as higher order abilities like Critical Thinking. Pearson's Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal is the industry's gold standard for assessment of Critical Thinking and many organizations in India are using it to assess managerial abilities like decision making as well as to train managers to become better decision makers.

ET: Psychometric testing has become a common practice in recruitments. Do you think there are chances that an organisation can make a wrong choice based on the results of those tests?

SE: While selecting candidates for employment, it is not recommended to use psychometric assessment in isolation. The test results should be considered in addition to personal interview and other evaluation methods. The test report will give an objective measure of a candidate's abilities and will help identify if there is a fit between the candidate's personality and the job profile. A robust evaluation process at the time of recruitment will ensure that there is a good fit between the job and the candidate's personality. Hiring mistakes can be costly, and a drain on the management's valuable time. It is therefore advisable to select the most appropriate instrument or a battery of tests for psychometric testing. The professionals that are involved in the selection of the instrument should first evaluate the instrument for cultural fairness and determine if there are norms for the local population. While testing, sufficient care must be taken to account for language barriers, cultural aspects, education, fatigue and historical background of candidates. In addition, any constraints such as limited normative data should be considered while interpreting the data and making the final decision.

ET: It has been often expressed that the current psychometric tests are western methods and not appropriate to Indian contexts. What are your views in this regard?

SE: Assessments that are authored abroad can be used in India with cultural adaptation and standardisation. There are a number of cultural aspects that must be considered while administering international tests in India. The test must be culturally fair, and sufficient care must be taken to adapt such tests for India. The adapted test items should be field tested and psychometrically analysed to ensure fairness. Pearson has published a number of clinical and talent assessments in India that have been culturally adapted, field tested and standardised. Customers in India benefit from the opportunity to use the most advanced assessments yet culturally adapted and standardised for the country. It is also very important to develop local norms for assessments that are used in the country.

ET: Please share some of the work that your organisation is doing, particularly with respect to children and schools in India.

SE: Pearson Clinical and Talent Assessment, a division of Pearson is a leading test publisher linked to some of the most respected names in psychology and school educational field. Our assessments address a range of special educational needs and clinical disorders, and are used by school psychologists and special education teachers. Our flagship assessments like the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), Dyslexia Screening Test (DST-J) and Raven' s Coloured Progressive Matrices have been successfully adapted and standardised for children in India. Data has been collected from thousands of school children in India to create local norms before publication of these tests. In India, Pearson is also well known for Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales, Screening of ADHD, Autism spectrum disorders and the famous Beck' s Youth Inventory for assessment of behavioural aspects of children including depression, anxiety, anger, disruptive behaviour and self concept. For dyslexia related learning disability problems, Pearson has a comprehensive solution for schools in India that include screening students using the Dyslexia Screening Test, identifying those children that are at risk, and a remediation solution for such students for improving reading skills. Pearson also offers a comprehensive teacher training program that includes training teachers on learning disability and early detection of dyslexia, and how to improve the reading skills in classroom settings using Pearson' s remediation workbooks. Pearson' s teacher training is offered across the country and thousands of teachers from schools across India have undergone learning disability related training. Pearson' s Cogmed is a computer based working memory training solution that helps school children in achieving improved academic performance and behaviour by increasing the working memory capacity of the brain through rigorous, scientific training. This program is currently being used by school children in India with positive results.

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We Recommend

Videos on YouTube

This month we share with you links to videos on YouTube

- 1) **Psychometric test advice:** This series of three video clips feature industry experts who tell us how to prepare for psychometric tests.
 - a. The first one gives a good insight into psychometric testing, how it works and what different kinds of tests are used.
Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUc1nXZM3KA>
 - b. The second video clip talks about what the candidates should know before taking these tests and why one should not cheat in these tests.
Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvD0dxYttb0>
 - c. The third video clip focuses on tips for preparing for these tests and the consequences of failing
Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gA0k_DARv_Y

- 2) **Successful psychometric testing:** This video is all about approaching psychometrics tests with confidence.
Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9ZALMehNrE>
- 3) **A guide to psychometric testing:** This video is an introductory guide from Learning Consultancy Partnership – UK. It explains different kinds of psychometric testing, how it can be applied, the advantages and the possible problems of using these tests.
Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD2cPPf33cE>

Happy viewing!

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Standing Ovation

Tropical Research and Development Centre



Tropical Research and Development Centre (TRDC), a Bangalore based NGO founded in 1994 and operational in Uttara Kannada, Mysore and Haveri Districts of Karnataka, has an objective of reducing poverty through education and conservation of natural resources for the future generation.

TRDC works with children, youth and women to improve their lives through education, skill development and the conservation of natural resources. The issues of acute poverty, natural resource degradation, ill health, illiteracy and lack of awareness on various aspects of development among the rural communities have prompted TRDC to focus on education, livelihoods, environmental regeneration and climate change adaptation activities. TRDC

works in arid and semi-arid tropical zones which are complex ecosystems with natural potential sufficient to provide a good quality of life, if the development approach adopted is socially just, ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate.

TRDC supports rural communities seeking to improve their quality of life by addressing the issues relating to lack of quality education among children, natural resource degradation, impact of climate change, alternative income and employment opportunities for young people to promote sustainable communities.

TRDC' s major programs and activities are as follows:

- A) TRDC Paryavaran: A project aimed at addressing the climate change issues through regeneration, enrichment of plants and wildlife conservation, restoration of wetlands/water resources and also to ensure involvement of youth and local farmers in conservation of natural resource to reduce effects of climate change. Some of the activities

under this program are:

- a. Strengthening educational efforts to protect environment
- b. Rehabilitation of village lakes/ tanks
- c. Promotion of community based rainwater harvesting
- d. Conservation of wild fruits trees
- e. Promotion of energy efficient ' Chula' for boiling water

B) TRDC Ashakiran: A project focusing on child education and child rights propagation in the rural areas of Haveri District. Some of the activities under this project are:

- a. Remedial Education for children from poor families
- b. Strengthening girl child education
- c. Promoting quality education among children from rural areas
- d. Microcredit and Micro-Enterprise promotion
- d. Networking, advocacy and lobbying

For its benign cause and its sincere efforts, TRDC deserves a ***Standing Ovation!***

If you want to get more information and support TRDC, you can visit the website <http://www.trdcindia.org/> or write to them at trdcindia@gmail.com.

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