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A reassessment of interactionism and a contextual-behavioural reinterpretation of Kiesler's interpersonal theory of personality

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Johannesburg, 1993

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Lara Jane England

21 day of JANUARY, 1993

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ABSTRACT

The realization has recently been reached that personality psychology is in a state of crisis, this being even more true of the cross-cultural assessment of personality. In this dissertation traditional methods of assessing personality are critically examined and the appropriateness of the use of various assessment methods in South Africa is considered. Interactionism is put forward as an alternative approach and its usefulness in assessment is evaluated. One method of operationalizing interactionism is Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle. In the light of the limitations of existing assessment methods, it is put forward that a contextual-behavioural representation of Kiesler's theory would solve many problems. An instrument was developed to allow the feasibility of this approach to be tested. In this instrument the testee interacts with a number of fictitious people with different characteristics. A study was conducted in which the 680 items were rated by 24 experts to establish if it is possible to obtain an acceptable level of agreement on the quadrant of the circle represented by the items. Overall, 16,7% of the items had to be revised. In the second study all items met the criteria set. The conclusion reached is that a contextual-behavioural representation of Kiesler's theory is feasible. The implications for assessment are considered.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PERSONALITY AS METAPHOR

In the physical sciences measurement is possible to a level of accuracy which is acceptable to, and goes unchallenged by, the greater majority of laymen and scientists alike. Yet Jones (1982), an eminent physicist, in a provocative book entitled *Physics as Metaphor*, describes the subjective collaborative process which goes into the construal and measurement of anything from an atom to an elephant. Length is just one of the metaphors we have created to make sense of our world, and its measurement is ultimately a subjective process necessitating, in the first place, an element of agreement as to where the elements constituting the object lie. According to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the position and the velocity of an electron in an atom at any given time can never be simultaneously or precisely determined and one must instead rely on probability. One response to this uncertainty is the depiction of an electron in terms of a wave. Stephen Hawking (1988), a renowned physicist, suggests that the random, unpredictable element is apparent only when we attempt to interpret this wave in terms of our preconceived notions of position and velocity. Measurement is not, then, an objective exercise and is instead, as Jones explains, a judgment subjectively created by the human mind.

The quantitative description of an object almost guarantees it an objective status. Yet certain things, such as the atom, which is essentially a mathematical abstraction whose portrayal in conventional space-time requires a substantial degree of compromise, do not comply with our numerical mania. Like the atom, and for that matter, the whole of space-time, personality may be regarded as a metaphor, a creation of the human mind developed primarily to bring an element of order to the chaos we experience and are surrounded by. Many personality assessment techniques have as their basis the preconceived ideas of the discipline and can be relied upon to produce the numerical tags which confer upon personality an objective status and serve to guarantee its independent existence. While science has been successful in concealing its metaphors, the attempt of personality psychology to do the same is somewhat disconcerting, and the assumptions which underlie this field of inquiry should be questioned.

The term "personality" came into being as a metaphor, taken from the Latin *persona* - a theatrical mask. The wearer of a particular mask could be expected to behave in a consistent manner throughout a performance. In a sense, personality was thus something imposed externally on a person. Rychlak (1976) chooses to conceptualize personality in terms of the introspective - a "behind the mask" approach - or the extraspective - an "in front of the mask" approach - depending on the theoretical perspective adopted. It is postulated however that theorists, and test constructors in particular, believe too readily that they are measuring an actuality: that they are able to see behind the mask.

That there is something inside a person that we may wish to call "personality" is not being disputed. From the earliest times, personality-type terms have been applied to human beings as descriptions or explanations for this inner state. Just

as taxonomies were constructed to bring order to an otherwise undifferentiated chaos of stars, animals and elements, men tamed men by physiognomy, imbuing them, in an early theory, with the permanency of either a phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic or choleric disposition. Thus, some system of organization is set up to allow people to organize the behaviour of others and of themselves. Categorization processes are essential in that they "allow us to identify objects, infer unobservable attributes, make predictions about the future, and understand the causes of events" (Lingle, Altom & Medin, 1984, p. 74). It is not the act of categorization to which we take exception, but to the unwarranted degree of insight which inevitably flows from it, insights which rely only on the knowledge of the taxonomer and which effectively exclude the subject. The taxonomer finds himself renamed as a personality assessor - but the insights remain largely the same. In this thesis, the assumptions and theory underlying the assessment of personality will be examined from both an extraspective and an introspective point of view.

1.2 THE STATUS OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

In books and journal articles, intimations are commonly found to the effect that personality psychology is in a state of crisis (e.g. Epstein, 1979; West, 1986). Concern has been expressed about the decidedly unprogressive nature of emerging theory. Sechrest (1976) humorously notes that the only thing wrong with the field of personality is that all its major theorists are dead! While this reflection undoubtedly contains an element of truth, more worrying is what Allport (1962) has referred to as a "methodological lag", denoting a situation

where the available assessment techniques are inadequate operationalizations of extant, if unprogressive, [illegible] We should in this respect heed Hogan, De Soto and Solano's (1977) misgivings about the mindlessness of much research. The lack of adequate attention given to creating an integrative structure for personality theory and research has also been noted (Rorer & Widiger, 1983; Wiggins, 1982).

The impression gained from a survey of journal articles is one of research psychologists all marking time, hoping that something cataclysmic will obligingly occur to infuse their research efforts with direction and meaning. In the interim, we must content ourselves with an abundance of research fragments thrown together without an integrating structure or research strategy. That a recent article in a well-respected journal could concern itself with fruit and vegetable metaphors for personality characteristics and not seem terribly out of place, bears testimony to the seriousness of this particular crisis. The development of theoretically sound research strategies is essential in order to counter the present plague of correlative statistics. While behind the scenes in the realm of theory there is a voice of disquiet, the assessment of personality is a thriving enterprise. To understand this situation we need to consider the utility of the discipline.

1.3 WHY ASSESS PERSONALITY?

So far it has been implied that personality in anything other than its metaphorical sense cannot be measured, and that the demise of the entire field may be approaching in the absence of a drastic re-evaluation. No attempt has been made either to define personality or to provide a reason for wishing to

measure it. The two are intertwined. Just as it can be said that, in the absence of a better understanding, intelligence is that which is measured by an intelligence test, so it can be said that each theoretical perspective will define - or create - personality in a manner congruent with its expectations. Personality can thus only be abstracted from the person by virtue of the boundary conditions imposed by a given perspective.

Some attempts to define why we are interested in the investigation of matters related to personality include the following:

- To further our understanding of human behaviour in general (Lanyon & Goodstein, 1982).
- To present a "general global picture of an individual's personality" (Maloney & Ward, 1976).
- To contribute toward an understanding of a particular individual's behaviour (Lanyon & Goodstein, 1982).
- To contribute toward an understanding of an individual's behaviour with a view to prediction (Lanyon & Goodstein, 1982).
- To be incorporated with other information, such as culture, to enable a country to make effective use of its human resources (Brislin, Lonner & Thorndike, 1973).
- "Understanding the understandings of individuals: how they construe their experiences, their predicaments, their lives" (Jones & Thorne, 1987, p. 491).

These can be subsumed under the three goals of understanding, painting a global picture and predicting behaviour. A large part of the controversy that surrounds

the field of personality assessment resides in the unwillingness of those involved to recognize the particular goal being addressed. More specifically, we are in agreement with Lamiell (1981) that at the very least the distinction between *differential* and *personality* psychology (we will refer to the latter as *personology* after Holt, 1962; see also Carlson, 1971) should be acknowledged when an instrument is to be used or evaluated.

Differential psychology has as its aim the establishment and validation of various individual differences that reliably and validly predict the performance of a person on a specified criterion in relation to similar others, with a degree of error that is established through the aggregation of data *across* persons. Personology, on the other hand, takes the *individual* as its starting point and attempts to identify consistencies and patterns of behaviour *within* the individual. Lamiell (1981) maintains that the empirical methods of differential psychology are incapable of addressing metatheoretical concerns at the level of the individual. Differential psychology is concerned with prediction, whereas personology deals with understanding. Although the assumptions underlying each approach can be questioned, the misguided application of either is a far more serious problem. Differential methods are, for example, singularly unsuited to providing a global picture of personality, a task to which they are nevertheless routinely applied.

The methodology of traditional assessment has been challenged on the grounds that it does not adequately reflect reality (Jones & Thorne, 1987). McGuire (1983) proposes a number of criteria for evaluating a psychological theory, one crucial one being that of "ecological validity such that the theory, on being empirically tested, conforms to some interpersonally observable reality that it is

supposed to describe" (p. 5). The success with which this is accomplished depends largely on either the extent to which the test constructor and the subject share the same world-view or reality, or else on the willingness of the test constructor to relinquish control over the testing experience.

1.4 SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY IN ASSESSMENT

In personality psychology, in a strange perversion of established grammatical laws, subject slips almost unnoticed into object and back again, the same being true of objectivity and subjectivity. That personality questionnaires of the trait-based paper-and-pencil variety are hailed as an exemplification of objective measuring devices is a surprisingly successful cover-up for what is essentially a faceted structure comprising varying degrees of objectivity and subjectivity. This stands in opposition to the positivist view, which believes in the existence of knowledge as an objective structure waiting to be discovered.

Building on Kuhn's (1970) claim that knowledge cannot be decontextualized or separated from the subjective, Greenwald (1980) questions the growth of psychology based on a series of assumptions which are uncritically held as truth. Greenwald presents an interesting parallel between the various cognitive biases in information processing and scientific paradigmatic biases, in particular that of conservatism, which functions to resist change and to provide justification for the *status quo*. Research evidence is selectively sought to maintain theories which may well be false. As Greenwald (1980) explains, "a successful paradigm accounts for an increasing range of phenomena ('paradigm-centricity'), credits

itself with confirmed, rather than with disconfirmed, hypotheses, and preserves the integrity of its theoretical constructs" (p. 610).

Tetlock and Manstead (1985) explicitly endorse an *uncritical* approach to research. They introduce their work on impression management by outlining the basic underlying assumptions which form a hard core, or starting point, for their line of research and state that "investigators should proceed as if the hard core were true. Their task is to articulate and refine the hard core, not to challenge it" (p. 60). Biases such as these, Greenwald ominously warns, are "the same ones that characterize totalitarian thought control" (1980, p. 610).

The development of theory in the field of personality, such as it is, has been fuelled by a number of debates, most notably the person-situation and nomothetic-idiographic controversies, each of which rests on a host of assumptions that are uncritically accepted and valiantly defended. In contrast, McGuire (1983), in sympathy with Greenwald, maintains from a contextualist perspective that "all theories (including even mutually contradictory ones) are right" (p. 7). McGuire (1983) cogently argues that the proper use of research is "as a continuing discovery process to disclose the hypothesis's full meaning by revealing its hidden assumptions and so specifying in which contexts its misrepresentations are tolerable and in which seriously misleading" (pp. 7-8). McGuire illustrates the principle of restrictive context with the example that "one's faith in the postulate that 2 + 2 = 4 is hardly weakened by the empirical discovery that two cups of sugar plus two cups of warm water yield far less than four cups of warm sugar water" (p. 18).

A blinkered, uncompromising approach to test construction leads to the imposition of a framework on the subject, be it in the form of a scale of trait-indicators or a group of critical situations. In terms of the assessment goals, such a rigid approach may find limited success in prediction, allows only an inaccurate global picture to be created and facilitates no understanding of the testee, who is but an object to be slotted into the investigator's operational framework.

Gilbert (1987) suggests that psychology unnecessarily imposes boundary conditions on its choice of methodology and field of inquiry, which effectively shuts out the people it would like to understand. Phenomenological and existential critiques of research and assessment share this sentiment and attempt to understand the individual in his own world, as he defines it, and not within the structure imposed by the researcher (Colaizzi, 1978). For this to become a reality, investigators have to relinquish their hold on what may be regarded as a subjective power-base and allow the subject to define the boundaries. This connotes an emphasis on the subjective process of the subject in the context of his or her interactions with the world as opposed to the subjective structure of the test constructor, an aim which, it is suggested in this thesis, is best addressed through an interactive form of interpersonal psychology. This approach to assessment will be evaluated in this thesis and an instrument developed to assess its virtues and feasibility. The instrument referred to makes no attempt to *measure* personality, but uses "personality" as a metaphor for the information it will generate with regard to predicting behaviour in a very limited domain - the work situation - and in providing an understanding of the way that the testee views, creates and interacts with the world.

1.5 OVERVIEW

The rationale for adopting a contextual-behavioural interactive approach to personality assessment is developed in Chapters 2 to 5. Chapter 2 is a discussion of assessment based on traditional trait theory, and the assumptions underlying this approach are critically evaluated. Various criticisms that have been directed at trait-based approaches are considered, as well as some of the developments which have arisen in response. The inability of these developments to adequately address the issues involved makes the consideration of interactionism - an alternative perspective - desirable. This approach, discussed in Chapter 3, is regarded as having great potential, and Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle, one of the more sophisticated interactionist theories, is evaluated in terms of the role it might play in interactive assessment. In Chapter 4 the testing relationship itself is discussed, primarily from the cognitive perspective of impression management, an approach which is compatible with interactionist theory. The consideration of aspects related to the cross-cultural relevance of personality theory and assessment practices cannot be overlooked. In Chapter 5 an attempt is made to identify the problems peculiar to the cross-cultural assessment of personality, as are apparent in South Africa today, and tests and psychometric practices currently in use are also reviewed. In Chapter 6 a model is presented for the development of a theoretically based personality assessment which challenges established testing procedures and opens up a number of avenues for exploration. The methodology for evaluating this approach is put forward in Chapter 7 and the results and discussion evaluating the feasibility of this approach is presented in Chapter 8. Finally, in Chapter 9, the limitations of the study are discussed, suggestions made for further resarch and the potential

contribution of the study to the field of personality assessment in this country considered.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 A RE-ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY

Trait theory can largely be held responsible for the misrepresentation of personality as an entity which can be objectively measured. Assessment conducted according to a trait model is the embodiment of an "in front of the mask" approach, in which a structure is externally imposed on the subject by the investigator, who nevertheless believes that he is behaviourally framing an entity that has a pre-existence "behind the mask". It has also been held responsible for the current state of disorder in the field of personality assessment (Hogan *et al.*, 1977), its utility in practical decision-making having been questioned (Butcher, 1982). In this section the concept of "trait" will be examined and a discussion will be presented of two main standpoints against it: that which questions the importance of consistency, and that which objects to an overly nomothetic approach to assessment. Some of the various techniques that have been proposed in response to these criticisms, and to the crisis in personality psychology and assessment generally, will then be discussed.

2.1 THE TRAIT CONCEPT

Trait theory has been subjected to a great deal of criticism in recent years. This notwithstanding, the concept of trait has won through in a number of unadulterated, as well as in some modified, forms and, what is more important,

trait-based assessment measures proliferate. Liebert and Spiegler (1982) discuss two main positions taken by trait theorists, these being:

- those who view traits as actual structures within an individual; and
- those who view traits as convenient theoretical constructs for summarizing an individual's behaviour.

These two positions should be regarded as the two poles of a continuum, with a fair number of intermediate approaches being possible. The position taken by theorists such as Allport (1937, 1962, 1966) and Tellegen (1988) clearly supports a belief in the existence of traits as physical structures. Allport (1937), for example, states that traits "are here accepted as biophysical facts, actual psychophysical dispositions related - though no one yet knows how - to persistent neural systems of stress and determination" (p. 339). Closer to the second category are the dispositional theorists, for whom a trait is "a *tendency* to perform a certain class of acts when the individual is placed in a certain class of situations" (Zuroff, 1986, p. 996). Traits are in this sense neither causal entities nor summary statements. Members of the second category include Fiske (1986), and Buss and Craik (1980, 1981, 1983). Fiske, drawing on the work of Buss and Craik, defines traits as "labels for fuzzy sets, categories of behaviours with vague boundaries, with multiple alternative criteria, and with some instances more prototypic, more nearly pure types than others" (1986, p. 35).

Magnusson and Endler (1977) have identified two main assumptions that underly a trait-based measurement model:

- A true score exists for each individual on each trait; and

- There is a monotonic linear relation between the latent position of an individual on a trait and that person's position on a scale which serves as an indicator of this trait.

These assumptions apply to a greater or lesser extent to all conceptualizations of traits: hence, all that is needed to meet any one of the assessment goals - prediction, description or understanding - is to ascertain a testee's true score, which then opens the door to considerable inferential information.

The behavioural manifestation of a trait can be addressed in terms of its *consistency*, the approach to which guides the interpretation of this score. Magnusson and Endler (1977) have identified three types of consistency: absolute consistency, relative consistency and coherence. *Absolute* consistency expects individuals to be consistent in the behaviour they show across all situations, and is a position we intuitively cannot entertain. *Relative* consistency assumes that the rank ordering of individuals on a trait dimension will be temporally and cross-situationally consistent. *Coherence* refers to the idea that behaviour, though not necessarily showing even relative consistency, is nevertheless lawful in that it can be explained in a way that is meaningful for a particular individual. An example from the literature will clarify these positions and will highlight some of the issues involved in the dispute between their proponents.

Hartshorne and May (1928) were interested in the trait of honesty in children. They conducted a series of studies based on the assumption that it would be possible to categorize children according to the degree of honesty they manifested in various samples of behaviour. They found that the correlations

between subtests were very low (an average of 0,23), which they took as an indication that honesty in one situation could not necessarily be used to predict honest behaviour in another. That is, that the trait of honesty is not cross-situationally consistent and does not support the conventional trait-theoretical notion of relative consistency. An explanation according to the principle of coherence has however been put forward by Allport (1937), who interprets these findings as an indication that "children are not consistent *in the same way*, not that they are inconsistent with *themselves*" (p. 250). For example, children may tell lies from timidity, to avoid hurting the teacher or to receive praise, and whereas these behaviours may be consistently manifested, they are unrelated to a general trait of honesty or to other behaviours such as stealing. Epstein (1979) brings it to our attention that Hartshorne and May then aggregated the data from the subtests into a single score with a reliability coefficient of 0,73, from which they conclude that while one test is an unreliable measure, by aggregating the scores of ten tests "we can safely predict what a subject will do on the average whenever ten similar situations are presented" (Hartshorne & May, 1928, p. 135). This demonstration that behaviour is both situationally specific *and* cross-situationally consistent might have ended, there and then, the person-situation debate, and might rightly have directed researchers to begin defining the range of convenience of their theories - a consequence still awaited.

2.2 THE CHALLENGE TO CONSISTENCY

The study conducted by Hartshorne and May was just one cited by Mischel (1968) in reaching the conclusion that correlation coefficients greater than 0,30 are rarely found for measures of consistency in personality and that whereas it

would be easy to predict people's behaviour if they responded in a highly generalized manner to many diverse stimuli, in reality behaviour is so strongly affected by the particular stimulus that it cannot accurately be grouped into traits. Mischel is not arguing for a strictly behaviourist approach such as that taken by Thorndike in arguing that behaviour is nothing but "independent and specific stimulus-response bonds or habits" (cited in M.W. Eysenck & H.J. Eysenck, 1980, p. 191) and does not dispute the existence of individual differences in response patterns. Mischel (1973, 1977a, 1979) states that situational variables provide the information necessary for an individual to respond, but that the response depends on cognitive social-learning person variables such as differences in construction competencies, categorization, expectancies, subjective values in expected outcomes and differences in self-regulatory functions. These arise from a response history and cannot be characterized as traits. Rosenzweig (1951, 1986) refers to this history as an individual's idioverse - "a unique dynamic organization of events through time" (1986, p. 242) - and it is this which distinguishes one individual from another and is what Mischel is prepared to accept as personality. Behaviour cannot in this sense be regarded as a sign, but as a sample. Consequently, the viability of predicting behaviour increases as the distance between the sampled behaviour and a criterion decreases.

Mischel attributes the existence of observable consistencies in patterns of response, to a number of factors. He finds evidence for a degree of temporal consistency, or stability, which arises because behaviour is similar on two occasions to the extent that the circumstances, or the situations in which they occur, are perceived as being alike. Mischel maintains that people then move far too readily from this perception of stability to cross-situational consistency.

Furthermore the way that individuals characterize themselves on a rating scale of the type found in personality questionnaires is, Mischel believes, particularly long-lasting, contributing to higher reliability coefficients than is warranted. A related point is the over-reliance on reliability indices in the absence of any evaluation of the validity of an instrument. A fair consensus has, for example, recently emerged concerning the main higher-order traits in the form of the five-factor model of personality. The belief expressed in this model is that the factors "both necessary and reasonably sufficient for describing at a global level the major features of personality" have been discovered (McCrae & Costa, 1986, p. 1001). Waller and Ben-Porath (1987) respond to this by pointing out that the studies relied on in reaching this conclusion are questionable in terms of both their selection and methodology and are "better thought of as demonstrating the reliability rather than the validity (or comprehensiveness) of the five-factor paradigm" (p. 887). Reliability coefficients say little about the cross-situationality of behaviour, and an overreliance on these figures should be avoided.

Consistency in Mischel's terms can be cognitively conceived, and his later work only serves to reinforce his earlier (1968) opinion which is summed up as follows: "The conviction that highly generalized traits do exist may reflect in part (but not entirely) behavioral consistencies that are *constructed* by observers, rather than actual consistency in the subject's behaviour" (p. 43). Other contributions that focus on man's creation of consistency include selectivity in the attention paid to the self (Mischel, Ebbesen & Zeiss, 1973); the tendency to attribute causal explanations for the behaviour of others to traits by way of simplification, whereas explanations for one's own behaviour are attributed to the situation (Nisbett & Ross, 1980); the use of implicit theories of personality to make sense of the world in terms of "what goes with what" (Shweder, 1975);

various cognitive biases, which include the bias resulting from the personally involved standpoint of the observers in the sense that their own participation induces consistency in the behaviour of others toward them (Greenwald, 1980); the primacy effect in which confirmation of initial impressions is sought (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Rumelhart, 1984) and the search for feedback which maintains a stable self-concept (Swann & Read, 1981). These forms of *observed* consistencies sustain our intuitive belief in consistency. Mischel (1969) emphasizes that the inability of researchers to find substantial cross-situational consistency "reflects the state of nature and not merely the noise of measurement" (p. 1014).

Mischel's position in relation to relative consistency and coherence will now be considered. In terms of the first, Mischel has been criticized for attacking a straw man. Fridhandler (1986), for example, refutes the view that he sees Mischel taking, maintaining that an absence of behavioural consistency is not necessarily definitive proof against the existence of traits. Friedhandler and others (e.g. M.W. Eysenck & H.J. Eysenck, 1980) propose the concept of a state, which is a mediator between a trait and a behaviour. States are thus the product of the interaction between individuals and their immediate environment, and enable a person to respond to a situation appropriately with, for example, sorrowful behaviour at a funeral and cheerful behaviour at a picnic. Whereas a person high on a trait of cheerfulness would be expected to be more cheerful than a person low on cheerfulness, this is an all-other-things-being-equal statement, providing for a situation where behavioural consistency is not observed but is still present at a mediating level. This is a somewhat confused response to Mischel as it overlooks the possibility that people are capable of making fine distinctions between situations, which may moreover have different meanings for different people. Trait-state theory is thus adept at providing

explanations with hindsight, but has to overlook a considerable amount of behavioural inconsistency in order to do so, and in the final analysis all it represents is a rejection of *absolute* consistency.

A position that can be taken more seriously is the view held by certain trait theorists (most notably Allport), who believe that behaviour exhibits coherence even though consistency may not be evident. This is possible because a wide range of behaviour may be indicative of *one* underlying trait and, conversely, *one* behaviour may be indicative of a wide variety of traits. An ingenious trait-theorist could conceivably, given enough information, construct an adequate "map" of an individual accounting for all his traits as well as his entire repertoire of behaviour. This is a position Mischel does not take great pains to counteract as the implications for assessment point directly toward situational specificity.

2.3 NOMOTHETIC AND IDIOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

The introduction of these terms into personality assessment can be attributed to Allport (1937), who differentiates between nomothetic methods, which seek to establish general laws, and idiographic techniques, which attempt to understand an individual's uniqueness. Allport (1962) endorses a view of human nature in which nomothetic and idiographic information is combined to form unique patterns that describe a person. In a similar approach, Kluckhohn, Murray and Schneider (1953 in Allport, 1962) state that a person is at once like all other people, like some other people, and like no other person (see also Rosenzweig, 1951, 1986). Psychology's concern, according to these theorists, is with all three of these principles, each being used to complement and supplement the others

for, as Runyan (1983) argues, "the solution of problems at one level of analysis will not necessarily solve problems at the other levels" (p. 418).

All too often the two approaches are pitted against each other. Nunnally, for instance, writes that "idiography is an antiscience point of view: it discourages the search for general laws and instead encourages the description of particular phenomena (people)" (cited in Hermans, 1988, p. 787). It is not difficult to find a personality theorist who regards the description of these particular phenomena as a valid endeavour, and although a trait theorist can theoretically take an idiographic stance (e.g. Allport), in the reality of assessment, trait-based procedures have been extensively criticized as being unable to make personal descriptions of people, relying as they do on group statistics. This discontent is widespread, and Tyler (1959) has expressed a belief that psychologists may be close to reaching the limit of achievement possible with a dimensional approach to personality. Pervin (1985) has noted the discrepancy between the pallid picture of a person painted by psychological research and the richness and diversity he sees in his patients. Carlson (1971), after a review of the research, asks if personality research should be defined as "the experimental study of personality fragments in artificial segments" (p. 209).

Once again the assessment goal is the crucial element in evaluating the suitability of a personality assessment instrument. Although a nomothetic trait-based approach may produce useful data for making accurate (or inaccurate) predictions, different information can be added to this through the use of idiographic methods. Mischel (1983), for instance, argues that norm-centred trait-based approaches may be appropriate for making "gross screening decisions, can permit group comparisons, and can answer many research questions", but

that they cannot "describe the particular individual in relation to particular psychological conditions of life and to other aspects of his or her own behaviour" (p. 591). This would require a person-centred approach. In summary we can say that the relative ease with which a trait-based questionnaire can be administered has to be offset against the rather restrictive information it can provide.

Responses to what have been seen to be the limitations of traditional assessment exemplified by the consistency controversy and the nomothetic-idiographic debate have been many and varied. While the majority remain firmly entrenched within a trait perspective, others are distinctly innovative. Some of these approaches will now be discussed.

2.4 IN SEARCH OF CONSISTENCY

A number of approaches have emerged in response to the search for consistency, both within a trait-based approach, in an attempt to find support for the somewhat mystic and elusive "true" score, as well as from situational, interactionist and cognitive perspectives. Relationships can be forced to occur through the experimental manipulation of variables to the exclusion of the person, who is no more than a container for these variables, an object to be described completely and correlatively. Aggregation has a similar aim, but instead of trying to control the variance, eliminates it by combining behaviour across categories. The third approach involves uncovering the conditions under which consistency occurs, thereby allowing the "true score" to represent insight. A related approach is Markus's (1977) schema theory, which provides a social-cognitive perspective on consistency. Another alternative perspective is provided

by implicit theories of personality, which draw our attention to the importance of recognizing the role of both cognitive and idiographic variables in the description of personality. Lastly, improving the technology which makes assessment possible constitutes a fourth response, with computerization representing the most significant development in this respect.

2.4.1 Increased Experimental Control

Out of a recognition that people behave differently in different situations, an attempt has been made to control experimental situations in order to eliminate "incidental" sources of influence (Epstein, 1980). The aim of these experiments is typically the discovery of universal psychological principles, that is, this method operates within a purely nomothetic framework. The limitation of this approach is its undefinable range of generalization (Cook & Campbell, 1979). As Cronbach (1975) notes, when a psychologist states that there is a relationship between two or more variables, other things being equal, "he is speaking from the experience of having made a lot of things equal" (p. 121). All that can then be said about the results is that they are "orderly". Trying to account for the multitude of variables that may leave things unequal - to identify interactions - is, Cronbach notes, akin to entering a hall of mirrors in which interactions, like images, multiply exponentially.

Earlier we mentioned the desirability of defining the conditions under which a theory holds true, of specifying when 2 + 2 does not equal 4. The failure of an experimental, statistical methodology to make these definitions does not undercut this position. Cronbach reaches the conclusion that personality should

be studied either in a situationally manageable context or through the development of guidelines inclined more toward the artistic than the scientific. Both of these approaches more readily allow one to make sense of the relationships between variables, and should be given careful consideration. The importance of making the study of personality the study of real people in a real world cannot be overemphasized. Carlson's (1971) assessment of the limitations of experimental design in the study of personality, brings this point home. She writes that:

> We cannot study the organization of personality because we know at most only one or two "facts" about any subject. We cannot study the stability of personality, nor its development over epochs of life, because we see our subjects for an hour. . . . We cannot study how persons strive for their important goals, because we elect to induce motivational sets. (p. 207)

It is an over-reliance on a mechanistic, experimental approach to personality research which is to a large extent responsible for the creation of the "pallid" people described by Pervin (1985).

2.4.2 Aggregation

Aggregation is the foundation on which nomothetic assessment rests. As early as 1928, Hartshorne and May used it to their advantage in predicting the average level of honesty over a number of behaviours. Aggregation has recently been reclaimed by Epstein (1979, 1980, 1983; see also Block, 1977) as an answer to the poor reliability coefficients noted by Mischel. Precisely *because* behaviour is so situationally specific, resulting in an almost infinite number of interactions between persons and situations, Epstein recommends that psychologists abandon

the futile goal of predicting the behaviour of any *one* individual in any *one* situation and instead focus their attention on uncovering the stable, underlying dispositions which guide behaviour. From this theoretical perspective a general score on, for example, the construct of Dominance would not be expected to yield useful information in answering an assessment question relating to a single domain such as the work environment.

Aggregation should ideally take place over subjects, stimuli, time and mode of measurement in order to reduce measurement error in each of these areas and to eliminate the undesired effect of extraneous variables, thereby broadening the range of generalizations. Aggregation over subjects, for example, "cancels out the effect of the uniqueness of individual subjects" (1980, p. 798). Lest this seem contrary to the goals of assessment, it should be remembered that trait-based questionnaires, such as Cattell's widely used Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), operate on precisely these principles. A subject's responses to a number of indicators that define the trait are aggregated to form a single score. This score is then compared to a norm-table compiled from the aggregated scores of a number of other subjects. It is not disputed that this type of aggregated prediction meets its goal of producing higher reliability coefficients, but the usefulness of the data generated is however regarded as questionable. Mischel and Peake (1982) criticize the procedure of aggregation for deliberately minimizing the uniqueness of the individual by regarding within-person variance and contextual factors as error. Epstein (1980) does not regard this as a problem and defends his position with the argument that just as a physicist's aim is to specify general laws governing the behaviour of gases, a goal which is not hindered by ignorance regarding the position of any one molecule

at a given time, psychologists can, through knowledge at a macro level, benefit from probabilistic prediction methods.

Hermans (1988) points to what he regards as a weakness of this argument by distinguishing between general-type and aggregate-type propositions. General-type propositions, though completely nomothetic, can be applied to one individual with complete validity, as they embody "truths" which apply equally to all people in a defined class. One example is the psychoanalytic principle that emotional conflict is always a prerequisite for neurosis, a postulate which holds until disproved. Propositions of the aggregate type are true of a *group*, but not necessarily of *each individual*. Psychology frequently errs in assuming that group statistics apply uniformly to all individuals, overlooking within-person variability. The limitations of this kind of actuarial assessment are severe, and although these techniques do elevate our potential for making guesses about people, they do not take us beyond that and we are in fact still guessing (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982). In the process of employment selection it is hard to see how the position of one "molecule" or applicant can be so lightly dismissed in favour of knowledge about a group, because ultimately psychometric scores contribute toward decisions being made about the life of one *particular* individual.

One type of aggregation that should be singled out is that of aggregation over a very narrow range of situations, which may increase the power of prediction (Moskowitz, 1982) in a way which is at once situationally specific and yet will not alienate assessors who almost innately rely on *scores*. This does not take into account the personal meaning a situation may have for a person, but at this point it provides a useful bridge between situational specificity and global dispositions.

2.4.3 Moderator-Variable Approaches

M.W. Eysenck and H.J. Eysenck (1980) note that prediction based on trait theory depends on the *meaningful* aggregation of scale items leading to *meaningful* correlations between scale scores and criterion measures, in order to produce high reliability coefficients. Moderator-variable approaches accept this rationale for assessment, but take issue with the universal assumption that all items and all traits are relevant to all people, suggesting that at times it may be necessary to modulate these relationships through the application of intervening, or moderating, variables. This cannot be equated with the search for interactions discussed earlier as applied to experimental control and is, rather, a *theoretical* attempt to make assessment more idiographically applicable to the individual. The rationale is that by making the equivalence classes smaller, some people, in some way and in some situations, will prove to be consistent.

Bem and Allen (1974) conducted what is perhaps the best-known study of this kind. They note two objections to traditional nomothetic measurement: firstly that it assumes that individuals will naturally sort behavioural instances into the same equivalence classes as those imposed by the investigator, and secondly that even were this so, it is assumed that subjects then scale these behaviours uniformly. If, as Bem and Allen suggest, the impressions we make of ourselves and others are organized idiographically in terms of unique behaviour patterns, rather than nomothetically, then existing measurement instruments may be looking for consistency in the wrong place.

As illustration they give the example of one lecturer who is very friendly toward students in her office, moderately outgoing when in a small seminar and quite reserved when lecturing a large class. Most of us are well able to regard these behaviors as consistent and, provided that we can agree that they relate to the construct of friendliness, we would not hesitate to label this person as "moderately friendly". In contrast, a lecturer who is formal with students in his office, moderately outgoing in a seminar and extremely friendly and sociable when lecturing a large class, may strike us as being singularly inconsistent even though quantitatively his "amount" of friendly behaviour could be regarded as equal to that of the first lecturer. Bem and Allen propose that intuitively, when forming a judgement of a person, we do not apply a trait term to a person and then evaluate its applicability, modifying it when necessary, but rather that "we attempt first to organize [a person's] behaviours into rational sets and only then to label them" (p. 510). The construct of friendliness, on which the second lecturer appeared to be inconsistent, is intuitively one which does not fit, whereas a different set of constructs, more applicable to the persona of stage performer perhaps, allows the behaviours to be usefully grouped.

Allport (1937, 1962) describes a morphogenic approach to measurement in which he postulates that traits are both necessary and sufficient to describe the behaviour of people, provided that these traits can be organized so as to be meaningful to an individual. Bem and Allen (1974) identify the operationalization of this principle as a research problem needing urgent attention, noting that the question springing from such a realization has always been "What's next?" In answer, Bem and Allen take what is nothing more than a very modest step toward idiographic assessment in attempting to identify a group of individuals who *do* classify (though not necessarily scale) behaviour in

the same way as does the investigator. This translates into finding those individuals who are consistent on a dimension, thereby producing less measurement error and greater reliability coefficients, enabling predictions to be from their scores with a greater degree of accuracy.

Bem and Allen chose two personality traits - friendliness and conscientiousness - and asked their 64 subjects to rate their own consistency on these traits with the question "How much do you vary from one situation to another in how friendly and outgoing [or 'conscientious'] you are?" This enabled the subjects to be grouped into those showing low and high variability. They took care not to confound consistency with overall trait level by first subgrouping the subjects according to their own ratings of trait level. On the dimension of friendliness, the criterion measures of self-reports on a scale, reports from significant others and behavioural observations resulted in mean intercorrelations of 0,27 for the high variability group and 0,57 for the low variability group, providing support for the use of consistency as a moderating variable.

The results with the conscientiousness scale were not impressive however and Bem and Allen suggest that this could be explained by the incongruence between the subjects' conception of conscientiousness and the examiner's definition of conscientiousness on the rating scales, an explanation which is suggested by the absence of congruence between the global self-ratings and ratings on the self-report scale. Once a statistical estimate of consistency based on the self-report measures was used to identify variability, greater coefficients were once again found for the low-variability subjects, with the exception of that for neatness, which produced greater intercorrelations for the high-variability subjects and was

clearly not regarded as forming part of a conscientiousness scale in this sample.

In a similar study, Kenrick and Stringfield (1980) allowed subjects to choose from Cattell's 16 dimensions those on which they regarded themselves as being most consistent. Their findings supported the use of consistency as a moderating variable and also provided evidence for the role of the observability of the subject's behaviour on a trait. Observability may be particularly important when assessing the congruence between the subjects', investigators' and significant others' scaling of behaviour and would explain the greater predictive success of friendliness, which is more observable than conscientiousness. Mischel and Peake (1982) failed to replicate Bem and Allen's findings, a failure which Funder (1983a) suggests may be due to the wide range of behaviours included in the study, as these may not uniformly operationalize the constructs used. It may thus not be sufficient to establish the relevance of a trait to an individual without due consideration of the behavioural items which might constitute this trait. This is supported by a study conducted by Gergen, Hepburn and Fisher (1986) in which it was found that subjects were unfailingly capable of producing explanations - independently rated as plausible - as to why an item could be regarded as an indicator of any one of a number of traits, including those which may be regarded as opposites. Once again, although the analysis of an aggregation of responses submitted to factor-analysis may enable one to identify the trait to which an item "belongs", a great deal of individual variability may be masked.

Lamiell (1981, 1986) and his associates (Lamiell *et al.*, 1983) have addressed the problem of item-relevance. They advance a number of methods, including theoretical determination, factor analysis and subjective judgements by the subject, for the construction of scales which have meaning for the individual

subject, thereby allowing measures of consistency on these constructs to be accurately made. The subject is compared not with the scores of anyone else, but with what he could be (according to the construction of his scales) but is not. One major limitation of these studies is that unless the number of items rated for relevance is extremely comprehensive, the final selection of items relevant to a trait may not be representative of the domain. That is, content validity will be threatened. In the 1983 study, for example, Lamiell and his colleagues utilized only 18 items for the construction of four traits. As Paunonen and Jackson (1986) have observed, this may also lead to the gross unreliability of scales, thereby producing spurious effects in the measurement of consistency.

Situations can also be used as moderating variables, the aim being to find those classes of situations in which behaviour is consistent. Bem and Funder (1978) have developed a method for "assessing the personality of situations" (p. 485), of providing "converging information as to the psychological nature of the behaviour and the experimental situation in which it occurred" (Funder, 1983b, p. 355). In a study concerning delayed gratification, Bem and Funder found that children whose parents described them as "obedient" were the ones most likely to choose to delay gratification. They concluded that these results were most likely to be validly generalized to other settings that incorporate an element of obedience - not self-control, as might be expected. Through an analysis of the behaviour in different settings it is thus possible to identify the *functional* aspects of the situation. Mischel and Peake (1982), in an attempt to replicate this study, found that the smallest changes in a situation altered the findings dramatically and could not support the usefulness of this approach. Funder (1983a), however, criticizes the atheoretical manner in which Mischel and Peake combine their

situations, stressing that the aim should be to discover regularity in the otherwise idiosyncratic manifestation of behaviour in situations.

2.4.4 Schematic Theory

Schematic theory documents the selective processing tendencies of individuals with regard to the mass of information available and puts forward the use of internal cognitive structures (Markus, 1977) or "mental models" of the elements constituting a world (Holyoak & Gordon, 1984) as the means to organizing this knowledge and the network of their interrelations (Rumelhart, 1984). Within this perspective, concepts are encoded in memory in terms of the *meaning* of the concepts in relation to other behaviours or events.

Markus (1977, 1983) focuses on the management of self-related information, and defines the corresponding self-schemata as "cognitive generalizations about the self, derived from past experience, that organize and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individual's social experiences" (1977 p. 64). Markus (1977) explains that "once established, these schemata function as selective mechanisms which determine whether information is attended to, how it is structured, how much importance is attached to it, and what happens to it subsequently" (p. 64). Schematic theory is thus concerned with all knowledge as it is present in an individual's consciousness (Markus, 1983).

Markus (1977) supports her claim for schematic theory with findings that those subjects who rated themselves as either extremely independent or dependent were more attentive to those qualities and were better able to decide whether

adjectives relating to these characteristics applied to them than were the subjects who described themselves as only moderately dependent or independent. Wyer and Gordon (1984) point out that some confounding of trait extremity and schematicism may exist, which would also explain Burke, Kraut and Dworkin's (1984) failure to show the superiority of schematic theory over trait theory in terms of consistency. This may also be attributable to the inadequate operationalization of schematic theory, as they started with pre-existing constructs which may not necessarily fit the subjects' organizational systems. The difference between trait and schematic theory often amounts empirically to one of interpretation, owing to this inadequate operationalization. Markus (1977), for example, puts forward a schematic interpretation of the Bem and Allen (1974) study discussed earlier, suggesting that subjects "who claimed they were consistent on a particular dimension may have been acknowledging a self-schema on this dimension" (Markus, 1977, p. 77). Unlike trait theory, which believes in the quantitative measurement of *amount*, schematic theory concentrates more on the "readiness or ability to categorize behaviour along certain dimensions" (Markus, 1977, p. 77), resulting in the categorical mental representation of persons.

Only when an individual has a well-articulated schema for managing relevant information can a trait be meaningfully applied to that person as a summary or framework for organizing a set of behaviours. Hence, cross-situational consistency can be expected only from individuals who are schematic and are therefore motivated to regulate their behaviour on a specified dimension. Markus (1983) suggests that behaviour that does not form part of an individual's relevant domain may best be predicted by the situation, indicating that self-knowledge is a significant mediator of social behaviour. Snyder (1979) takes a

different but related approach, using the person and not the construct as a moderating variable: individuals, he suggests, may be classified into high self-monitors whose behaviour can best be determined by the social situation, and low self-monitors whose behaviour is most predictable by means of individual or personality factors. The Self-Monitoring Scale developed by Snyder classifies individuals in this way. Self-schemas may thus not always be afforded the opportunity to mediate behaviour, particularly when the situation demands a certain response, this being more true of some individuals than of others. Behaviour may thus appear to be inconsistent to an observer because of the social or situational constraints on an individual's behaviour which limit the range of potential behaviour at that time, while allowing consistency at the level of "preferences, values, motives, goals and plans" (Markus, 1983, p. 550).

2.4.5 Implicit Personality Theory

Bem (1983) sees "person" in his interactionist view as referring to "a person's stylistic ways of processing information and interacting with the internal and external environment" (p. 574). One way of describing this interaction is in terms of an individual's implicit personality theory (IPT). This represents an attempt to discern the "psychological framework of inference that links one trait to another" (Tzeng & Tzeng, 1982 p. 223), or "what goes with what" for an individual. The prevalence of IPT is typically ascertained in the degree of congruence between the probabilistic or estimated co-endorsement of test items and the actual co-endorsement of these items (Amelang & Borkenau, 1986). In contrast to Buss and Craik's finding that subjects are able to agree substantially on the prototypicality of behaviour constituting a trait, Beck *et al.* (1985) found

evidence for the existence of individual differences, explicable in terms of multiple implicit theories of personality. Passini and Norman (1966) provide evidence in support of IPT, finding that raters who had very little previous interaction with a person produced factor structures very similar to those generated through ratings of people well-known to them. Furthermore, similar structures could be generated from semantic data alone (Norman & Goldberg, 1966). An extreme position on IPT is taken by Shweder (1975), who argues in favour of a systematic distortion hypothesis in which trait ratings are made purely on the basis of the semantic similarity accorded the terms by the testee.

Against this should be viewed the number of trait rating studies which found considerable agreement among raters (e.g. Mischel & Peake, 1982; Bem & Allen, 1974; Mc Crae, 1982), suggesting that judgments are either behaviourally based or formed from shared implicit theories. It seems likely that a combination of shared and individual IPTs, together with behavioural information, provides the best explanation, the contribution of each being determined by the circumstances (Kenrick & Dantchick, 1983). Mirels (1982) suggests that the inferences people make will be more valid, more relevant and less dependent on semantically-based systems and cultural stereotypes when particularly salient data override these IPTs. Shweder (1975) argues for the behavioural validation of ratings, but this may not, McCrae (1982) notes, adequately operationalize the constructs. Whether a person's implicit theory of personality is based on experiential observations or on semantic similarity, IPT provides a further reason to question even the limited amount of consistency found by trait-based personality questionnaires. It also points the way toward a serious consideration of more idiographic, cognitive approaches in the search for consistency.

2.4.6 Computerization

Terre Blanche (1987) sees the resuscitation of personality assessment as lying not only in methodological or in theoretical advances, but in the technology used to make representations of personality possible. Developments in personality assessment have not, Terre Blanche notes, kept pace with theoretical innovation, and psychometric techniques or methodological advances offer nothing more than refinements. One possible alternative, proposed by Terre Blanche, is the increased use of the computer in personality assessment.

The advantages and difficulties relating to the administration, scoring and even the interpretation of computerized conventional tests, have been well documented (Butcher, Keller & Bacon, 1985; Fowler, 1985; Hofer & Green, 1985; Taylor, Gerber & Rendall, 1981). Butcher, Keller and Bacon (1985) suggest however that whereas the advantages of speed, accuracy and objectivity brought to personality assessment by computers have been well utilized, a third advantage, that of flexibility, has not. Adaptive testing procedures, which Butcher, Keller and Bacon (1985) regard as an embodiment of flexibility (see also Weiss, 1985), do not even come close to using the full potential of computerized testing systems. Stasser (1990) has noted that whereas these aforementioned procedures use the computer only to implement a *method*, the potential is there for the use of the computer as *theory* - to communicate conceptual ideas, to provide new interpretations of data, to extrapolate beyond existing data and to guide research. It is in this way that researchers can meet what Hofer and Green (1985) refer to as the "challenge of creativity", using original and innovative applications in the representation of personality.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

The studies discussed above have important implications for personality assessment as a thriving enterprise based on nomothetic, normative comparisons and suggest that a considerable degree of caution be exercised in interpreting, and especially in relying on, these measures for practical purposes. The assumptions and rationale underlying personality questionnaires are invariably founded in the principle of aggregation. It is not being disputed that, in the aggregate, various occupational groups are represented by individuals who are statistically more likely to demonstrate characteristics from a given profile, with a probability significantly greater than chance. Selecting an individual with a particular occupational profile when a vacancy arises is, as Allport (1962) cogently argues, a way of tipping the odds in favour of making a correct placement decision and constitutes a probabilistic tool which it would be prudent to use Evidence cited in support of personality questionnaires such as the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) predominantly shows the existence of *concurrent* validity - that is, subjects have already self-selected themselves into the various occupations. Although this is undeniably a legitimate and valuable approach, it overlooks the importance of the role played by the individual's preferences in choosing the occupation in the first place. This means that *predictive* validity is not addressed and it is this type of validity that is crucial if predictions relating to job satisfaction and performance are to be made.

Personality assessment is not always, or even predominantly, conducted according to rigid exclusionary principles reliant on categorization. However, profile

matching can lead to a subtle form of corporate cloning in which the tried and trusted wins through every time to the virtual exclusion of individual variability. H.J. Eysenck and M.W. Eysenck (1985) categorically state that whereas Japan is an introverted country, the United Kingdom is predominantly extraverted, but they fail to integrate this observation with their explicit belief in the value of occupational profiles. A proportion of typically introverted jobs is presumably being performed quite adequately by extraverts in the United Kingdom, the converse being true in Japan, if the economic standing of both of these countries is anything to go by. This suggests that a high level of functioning can be successfully maintained in more than one way, an effect which, as we shall see later, has even greater significance in a multicultural society such as South Africa.

A different picture emerges when general-type propositions can be said to hold, in that severe constraints on the performance of a particular job can be identified and irrefutably supported. Although not stated in quite these terms, Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) view one of the constraints on the selection of pilots as being an ability to perform under stressful conditions. In this context, the finding that flying success is negatively related to neuroticism may render this criterion important enough to be regarded as a boundary condition. If the functional aspects of a job were to be discerned through procedures more convincing than merely by ascertaining the tendencies of people already placed, this would carry greater weight. The need, as Wernimont (1988) suggests, for a more effective linking of information about human attributes - such as personality with job analyses - becomes increasingly important. This approach provides a more clearly defined role for personality assessment in industry, a role

for which the undifferentiated instruments currently available are singularly unsuited.

The relevance of a trait as defined by the investigator has been seen to depend largely on the congruence between the investigator's and the subject's notion of behaviours which constitute indicators for that trait. The Bem and Allen (1974) study suggests that a subject's intuitive aggregation of behaviours produces results vastly different from those generated by a nomothetic scale for certain traits. Taking a cue from Kenrick and Stringfield, it is suggested that observability may play a role in the generation of trait ratings. Bem and Allen's findings that ratings of friendliness showed more correspondence than did those of conscientiousness, may be attributable to conscientiousness being as much a state of mind as behaviourally evident, whereas friendliness is a more observable trait. A more extreme position on trait ratings is taken by those theorists who believe in the idiographic arrangement of traits only in the form of implicit theories of personality, the individual nature of which render trait-rating scales totally meaningless. Although refinements in methodology, as well as in technology, such as computerization, are essential to the progress of the discipline, a critical re-evaluation of the degree of error we are prepared to accept in the methods we use when making decisions about another person's life becomes necessary.

The role of the situation may prove vital to personality assessment. In making inferences based on a "true" score in the absence of any attempt to account for the situation there is, says Bowers (1977), a "danger of conceptualizing too far beyond the evidence and that when we do, we generally do so in terms of some favoured construct system or psychological theory whose hold on us exceeds our grasp on reality" (p. 72). In asking subjects for true or false responses to, for

instance, item 141 of the Personality Research Form AA (Jackson, 1965), "I am quite good at keeping others in line", subjects presumably make some kind of an average or aggregated judgement taking into account all or some of the situations in which they would respond "True" and those in which they would respond "False". Where no provision for the qualification of this response is made, the final judgement loses much of the qualitative information that may be relevant to "personality" in terms of one or other of the assessment goals.

By using the situation as a moderator variable, it is possible to group situations into equivalence classes which may make generalizations more appropriate. Consequently, predictions will lose less information in the making. Although Mischel and Peake (1982) disagree with this approach as far as the breadth of equivalence classes goes, the implications of their situation-specific approach to assessment are similar and involve understanding events at a local level. Mischel, for instance, would have us predict school-related conscientiousness from a measure of conscientiousness at school and not from a global disposition of conscientiousness. Cronbach's (1975) futile search for interactions brought him to the same conclusion. He suggests that a measure of success in one work situation may not even be transferable to another similar work situation and recommends that the assessment of behaviour therefore needs to be done locally and as specifically as possible. Furthermore, the work of Markus (1977) and Snyder (1979) indicates that even within one situation, the social constraints perceived by different subjects may differ substantially, pointing to the need for more idiographic methods.

It is important at this point to distinguish between *situational specificity* in behaviour and the overall *connectedness* of all behaviour for an individual.

Although a person does respond to the *unique* arrangement of each situation, in so far as it seems similar to another situation in terms of his personal reference point, he will respond to it similarly. From a relational point of view Nuttin (1977) maintains that a person's gradually expanding world is the basis for his uniqueness, as new situations are integrated into his personal world, forming an experiential basis for consistency. Mischel recognizes the value of advocating past behaviour as a predictor of future behaviour. For, as Cronbach (1975) states, "in order to give a wide reach to our explanations, we make experience cumulative by extracting from it" (p. 126). Mischel (1983) proposes that we "search for the organization and structure of behavior as it unfolds over occasions and situations" (p. 592), this being possible both within an assessment setting on a micro level, and with reference to an individual's life on a macro level.

Carlson (1971) has decried the omission at the macro level, objecting to the psychometric tradition in which "subjects' phenomenological reports are routinely sought . . . and equally routinely nonanalyzed and nonreported" (p. 214). Relating past, present and future psychological environments to one another is an essential part of assessment in establishing behavioural coherence and in understanding the way in which behavioural patterns are maintained. This sort of approach would overcome both of Funder's (1983b) main objections to behavioural sampling as a method of assessment, namely that the range is too narrow, thus making reliability and validity questionable, and that generalization to a "real" situation may still be unwarranted as behaviour may not always be exactly what it seems. While Mischel's approach treats *process* nomothetically in that a person's past history constitutes a repertoire of responses to different situations, the actual *content* of the responses is treated idiographically in the

recognition of individual variation (Bem, 1983). It is in this sense that it is able to move from description to a goal of prediction.

A belief in relative consistency is the most conducive to making simple predictions with trait-based rating scales. The challenge to this type of consistency has not dampened the enthusiasm of assessors using trait-based measures, and the implications need to be noted. Shweder (1979) maintains that "a good theory is both parsimonious (it explains a lot and does it with relatively few categories and principles) and valid (it has predictive utility)" (p. 305), but after careful consideration concludes that "the predictive success of one's theory is inversely related to its parsimony and *vice versa*" (p. 305). Searching for both, Shweder laments, leads to a disquieting fork in the road:

> The signpost on one road reads: "Anything can be explained; little can be predicted." The signpost on the other road reads: "Anything can be predicted; little can be explained." (p. 307)

Trait theory, though parsimonious, cannot be used to make *specific* predictions, though it can provide very general predictions to be supported with *ad hoc* explanations. On the other hand, given enough information, predictions about t + 1 can be made from t, thereby providing costly predictions in the absence of a theoretical framework. Dedicated personality assessors cannot afford to side with Shweder, who despairingly writes that "at the fork-in-the-road, I would turn back" (p. 308), and solutions must be found.

The vagaries involved in making predictions from nomothetic trait-based measurements, as well as the presence of theoretical and practical difficulties

which restrict the application of person-centred approaches such as that proposed by Mischel, make consideration of a third perspective - interactionism - of value, and this is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 INTERACTIONISM

Early approaches to interactionism within psychology may be seen in the work of Kantor, Lewin and Murray (Endler & Edwards, 1986). In 1924 Kantor wrote that the "unit of analysis should be the individual as he interacts with all of the various types of situations which constitute his behavior circumstances" (cited in Endler & Edwards, 1986, p. 379). Lewin similarly emphasizes that the elements of any person-situation relationship are mutually interdependent, indicating his belief in the reciprocity inherent in the interaction. Murray's (1938) well-known motivational theory, which incorporates the person in terms of "needs" and the environment in terms of "press", is perhaps the most comprehensive of the early interactionist theories. In addition, it successfully distinguishes between the physical and the psychological environments. Despite these early theoretical developments, empirical research or any thorough investigation of the operative mechanisms was a long time coming and was perhaps inspired by Mischel's (1968) criticism of the situation-free type of trait theory prevalent at this time. The conceptualization of persons-in-situations may be the way that information is cognitively organized (Cantor, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982), and interactionism, while remaining faithful to trait theory, tries to overcome its weaknesses through an explicit attempt to account for the situation.

Magnusson and Endler (1977) identify two types of interactionism - mechanistic and dynamic. Mechanistic interactionism is an attempt to determine statistically

the proportion of variance attributable to person and situation. Dynamic interactionism postulates that person and situational variables "are integrated in order to describe and explain the *process* whereby individual behaviour develops and maintains itself" (Magnusson & Endler, 1977, p. 19).

3.1 MECHANISTIC INTERACTIONISM

The attempt to settle once and for all the proportion of variance accounted for by person and situation proved futile, as the results supported neither the claim for person nor that for situation. Bowers (1973), having reviewed 11 such studies, concluded that persons accounted for 11,27 % of the variance, compared with situations at 10,17 %. The interaction between person and situation accounted for 20,77 % of the variance. Although much faith was initially placed in these figures as evidence in support of interactionism (Sarason, Smith & Diener, 1975), it soon became apparent that it was not clear just how they should be interpreted. Furnham and Jaspars (1983) reviewed all the studies of this type available at the time and concluded only that the results depended heavily on the representativeness of the person, situation and responses sampled (see also Bowers, 1973; Mischel, 1968; Olweus, 1977). It is possible to predetermine the patterns of variance by selecting variables which support the desired outcome, rendering questions of person or situation "intrinsically unanswerable" (Olweus, 1977).

3.2 DYNAMIC INTERACTIONISM

Magnusson and Endler (1977) see the goal to be reached by dynamic interactionism as being the description of an individual through a profile of situations and responses, which then allows the determination of lawfulness in the individual's behaviour. Pervin (1977), for example, attempts, through the representative sampling of situations, to construct a cross-situational profile that facilitates interpretation as patterns of reactions emerge across significant situations. It is difficult to see how this static end-product, relying on the categorization of people, is dynamic in any sense, and it can best be regarded only as a taxonomy based on moderating variables. Dynamic interactionism in its true sense explicitly acknowledges the bidirectional or reciprocal effect of person on situation and *vice versa*. In this sense it is not sufficient for a trait theorist merely to acknowledge the pull of the situation without explicating the way in which this occurs. In a mechanistic sense, almost anyone can climb on the interactionist bandwagon; suddenly there are no trait theorists who believe in consistency and no situationalists who do not believe in individual differences. In fact, as Bem (1983) notes, if one believes all the "I-never-saids" and "I-never-meants" emanating from the person-situation debate, then "there's nobody here but us interactionists" (p. 572).

Emmons, Diener and Larson (1985) point out that there is an absence of appropriate technology for the analysis of interactions in the dynamic sense. Theory development in this field of study will have to be accompanied by revolutionary advances in this respect if it is to become a feasible approach to personality assessment. Despite technological limitations, two developments

show promise, the first being an explication of the way that situation selection and personality variables interact; the second being interpersonal theory, where other people constitute the environment with which an individual interacts dynamically.

3.2.1 Situation Selection and Creation

Theorists from various backgrounds have commented on the role people play in creating their environments. Allport (1937) observed that people seek out situations which complement their dispositions. Plomin and his coworkers explain this in terms of a genetic disposition (Emmons, Diener & Larsen, 1985). Mischel (1968) proposes that it is the propensity of individuals to seek out certain situations which maintains the appearance of consistency, later writing that "the study of social interactions vividly reveals how each person continuously selects, changes, and generates conditions just as much as he or she is affected by them" (1977, p. 248). With this in mind, Mischel argues that psychologists should refrain from subjecting all individuals to the same set of situations, as happens in standard personality inventories. He maintains that if the "mutual interaction between person and conditions" is to be effectively studied, it must be done "in the interpersonal contexts in which it is evoked, maintained and modified (1977a, p. 248). Mischel expects that the study of people in their chosen settings will reveal much about the differences between people. Snyder (1983) cogently argues that to the extent that individuals spend time in chosen situations that "promote the display of behavioral manifestations of their characteristic dispositions, these individuals will come to display the consistencies and stabilities that typically are regarded as personality" (p. 510).

Emmons, Diener and Larsen (1985), in their review of studies relating to these issues, found extensive empirical support for these claims. Attempts to establish that individuals seek out situations commensurate with their personalities have been partially successful. Extraversion on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), for example, was found to correlate 0,35 with a sociability factor including time spent in various social activities (Emmons, Diener & Larsen, 1985). However, some confounding of variables is likely here because time spent in a social situation, for example, forms part of the construct of extraversion and cannot be used to validate the theory in this way.

Emmons and Diener (1986) postulated that behaviour should be more cross-situationally consistent in chosen situations than in imposed situations, as the former should more readily allow the free expression of personality, but the findings were to the contrary. This result can be explained by a possible relationship between imposed and what have been called "powerful" situations (Mischel, 1977b). Powerful situations demand a certain response - a red traffic light for example demands that the motorist stop - and do not allow for the manifestation of a range of behaviours. The situations used by Emmons and Diener (1986) may not have been sufficiently "weak" to reveal an individual's personality in terms of consistent behaviour. Emmons and Diener (1986) conclude that "one would not expect traits to predict behaviour in these situations, because these situations are likely to have similar psychological meanings for different individuals" (p. 1018). The lowest correlation of all was that between behaviour in chosen and in imposed situations and, while personality measures cannot be considered to be imposed in the same sense, responses to these items cannot be regarded as being in any way representative of behaviour as manifested in chosen settings.

These studies suggest that the relationship between personality and situation is far from simple. Although situation selection does seem to reflect - or form part of - personality, the expression of personality in chosen situations may attest more to inconsistency than to consistency. And, although the range of situations used in these studies was too small to be conclusive in this respect, the results do suggest that the use of imposed situations, as are found in personality questionnaires, may not allow scope for the expression of individuality and that they do in effect produce consistency for the wrong reasons. Paradoxically, while the position taken in the theory of situation selection is explicitly interactive, no measure is made of "interaction", the results resting inferentially on correlations between person and situation variables. This further complicates their interpretation and again indicates the need for the development of technology capable of dealing with interactions.

3.2.2 Interpersonal Psychology

In one form or another, all personality theories account for the social interaction between people. Freud's theories, though essentially intrapsychic, place the young developing child firmly within the context of the family. James (1890) wrote that "a man has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares" (p. 294), representing a move away from a view of the self as unity toward a conception of the self based on interaction with significant others. Interpersonal psychology represents an explicit rejection of the individual personality for, as Chrzanowski (1982) states, "the image of an 'authentic' self, immaculately embedded somewhere in the human mind, defies the principle of interacting facets of human personality and interdependency" (p.

38). The origin of interpersonal psychology as we know it is commonly traced to Sullivan (1953), who defines personality as "the relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations which characterize a human life" (pp. 110-111). Chrzanowski (1982) expresses this sentiment simply but clearly in his belief that "a characteristic 'Me' emerges most clearly opposite a characteristic 'You'" (p. 38). As with James's (1890) view, personality in terms of consistency is seen by Chrzanowski as a constellation composed of previous interactive patterns and is moreover reactive and therefore constantly changing and developing. Based on this notion that an individual can only be understood in context, Leary (1957) identified people's relations with their fellow human beings as constituting the most revealing and pertinent aspect of the environment with regard to the study of personality. The actual presence of another is not a requirement for, as Kiesler (1982) states, "even when we are physically alone, we carry other persons with us and engage these others symbolically" (p. 5).

Theories of social interaction have taken many forms. Raush (1965), using multivariate informational analysis and transition probability analysis, found that with knowledge of the situation, the nature of a group and the actions of one child, the subsequent actions of another child could be predicted quite accurately. Kenny and his colleagues (Kenny & La Voie, 1984; Malloy & Kenny, 1986; Warner, Kenny & Stoto, 1979) have put forward a component approach to personality that aims at partitioning the variance into factors of person, situation and interaction, while still recognizing the reciprocity of behaviour. The result is their Social Relations Model, which uses a round robin analysis of variance. In this design all possible pairs of individuals in a group engage in interaction to allow the monitoring of incoming and outgoing behaviour, as well as that which is specific to the relationship. This approach has generated

valuable information about relationships in a number of domains (see Ingraham & Wright, 1987; Wright & Ingraham, 1985, 1986; Wright, Ingraham & Blackmer, 1985). Although sound in its intention to view individuals as "both cause and effect, subject and object" (Malloy & Kenny, 1986 p. 204), it does not overcome the mechanistic consequence of partitioning variance in this way. A more serious limitation is the complete absence of any theoretical framework for the study of interactions. [illegible] far the most sophisticated analysis of interpersonal behaviour takes place within the interpersonal circle model of interaction, and it is to this which we now turn.

a) The Interpersonal Circle

In the attempt to [illegible] behaviour as orderly and lawful, two main approaches have been taken: the multidimensional, such as Cattell's, and approaches which portray fewer dimensions but attempt to model them in real space (Benjamin, 1974). Wiggins (1982) has noted the lack of meaningful organization in trait theory, relying as it does on what Holt (1962) has termed "and-summative" principles. The only serious multidimensional attempt at creating an organized system from the chaos (Powell & Royce, 1981; Royce, 1983) leaves much unexplained and provides no explication of the integrating mechanisms. The real-space approach, in contrast, makes explicit the nature of the relations between its factors. Leary and his colleagues (Freedman, Leary, Ossorio & Coffey, 1951; Leary, 1957) began their work in an attempt to describe "all variables comprising the total personality . . . [in] systematic relationship to one another" (Freedman *et al.*, 1951, p. 144), each of which should possess interpersonal reference. Interpersonal theorists such as Sullivan (1953) and

Kiesler (1982, 1983) explicitly acknowledge that an individual is a unique entity for whom situations have not only an objective meaning, but also constitute a psychological experience. Behaviour is more than just the result of situations and interpersonal motives, and "the focus instead is on two-person mutual influence, on bidirectional causality" (1982, p. 9). Kiesler (1982) goes on to explain that "human social behaviour is embedded in a feedback network wherein the 'effect' influences or alters the 'cause', where the person both affects and is affected by the environment, where independent and dependent variables are arbitrary and interchangeable" (p. 9).

Some consensus has emerged that interpersonal behaviour can best be represented by a circular model, as first proposed by Leary and his colleagues. This refers to a geometric, monotonic relation between variables, described by Wiggins as follows:

> Adjacent variables (in a matrix) should be more highly correlated than non-adjacent variables, and the degree of correlation between any two variables should be a direct function of their distance from each other on the circle. (In Conte & Plutchik, 1981, p. 701)

Conte and Plutchik (1981) assert that when conditions such as these exist, factor analysis of the intercorrelations matrix, and the subsequent plotting of the loading of variables on two orthogonal axes, will reveal this circumplex. Although theorists hold different views on the arrangement of the segments and the appropriate units of differentiation, support for the two factors first discovered by Leary, labelled Love and Dominance, has been extensive over many different subject groups and methodologies (Benjamin, 1974, 1979; Briar & Bieri, 1963; Conte & Plutchik, 1981; Foa, 1961; Lorr & McNair, 1965;

Paddock & Nowicki, 1986; Russel, 1980; Strong *et al.*, 1988; Truckenmiller & Schaie, 1979).

Leary's original model resulted in 16 categories or segments of interpersonal behaviour arranged around the circle, with the nodal points representing Dominance-Submission along one axis and Love-Hate along the other. These dimensions have been renamed by different theorists, with Friendliness-Hostility sometimes replacing Love-Hate. The axes are also frequently referred to as the dimensions of Control and Affiliation. The remaining categories are then combinations of the nodal points, with distrust, for example, being a combination of hate and submission. Kiesler (1983) sees as a limitation of Leary's and other subsequent models that although in theory segments located opposite each other on the circle should represent either behavioural contrasts or semantic opposites, this has not been found to be the case. Kiesler further notes the inadequacy of the definition of the adjectives. In the 1982 Interpersonal Circle, shown in Figure 3.1, Kiesler presents a reformulation using well-defined bipolar constructs incorporating specific, behavioural acts in its operationalization. Kiesler's model is in this sense the most advanced and is particularly well suited to a predictive function. This formulation of interpersonal psychology has therefore been selected to form both the theoretical rationale and the operationalization of the model proposed in Chapter 6.

Jackson and Helmes (1979) have criticized the interpersonal model on the grounds that it is overly simplistic, insisting that it is unrealistic to expect two factors to adequately describe personality and that furthermore the lack of independence of the traits generated seriously compromises convergent and discriminant validity. But it is this very relatedness of traits which may be seen

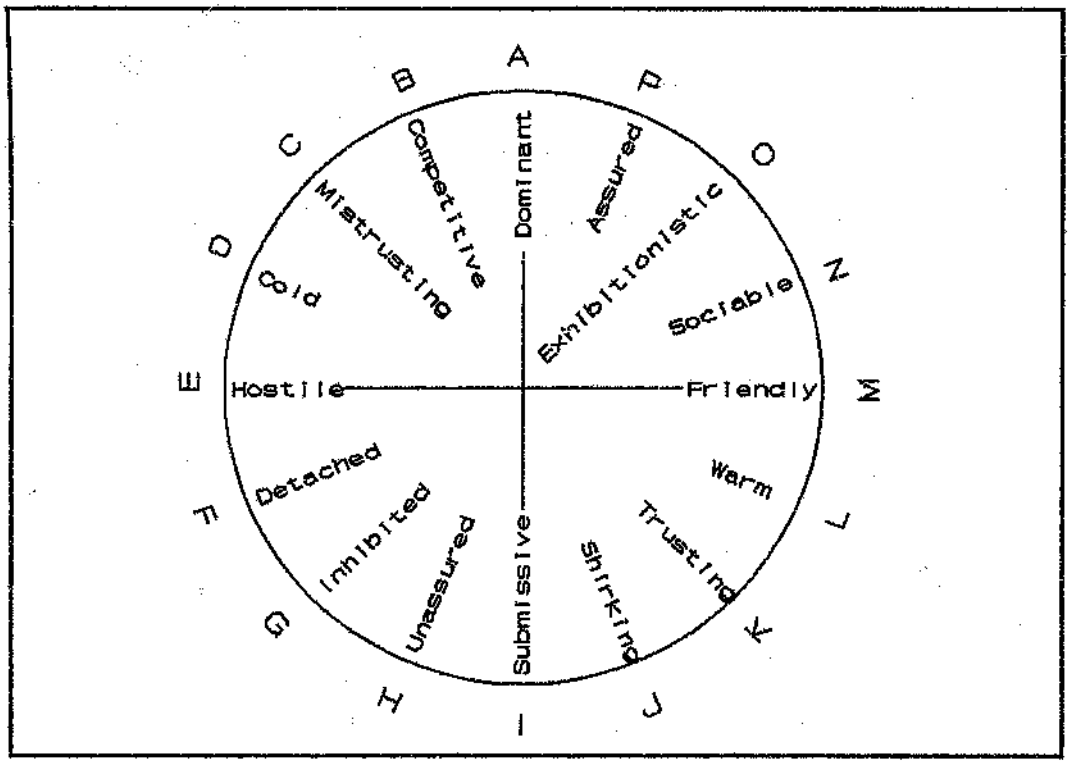


Figure 3.1: Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle (adapted by Terre Blanche, 1987)

as its strength in offering a manageable, organized system (Benjamin, 1974). Conte and Plutchik (1981) point out that the "axes are simply arbitrary reference points that enable factor loadings to be plotted. Once the position of each trait-term relative to every other has been determined, the axes may be removed, and all relations among the terms will be expressed through the circular network" (p. 707). The two dimensions thus serve as an integrative framework and do not unduly restrict either the traits or the behaviours represented.

In relation to Jackson and Helmes's second point, Wiggins (1979) suggests that the concept of the independence of rating scales has outlived its usefulness and expresses a view that interpersonal traits be viewed as "fuzzy sets" or categories "representing elements . . . whose class membership is continuous rather than

discrete" (p. 409). The interpersonal circle, Wiggins (1985) suggests, is particularly well suited to a conceptualization in which elements of each category "are organized with reference to a prototype that falls near the center of the perimeter of a given wedge" (p. 628). The specification of the elements in terms of *acts* put forward by Kiesler (1983) is quite consistent with this approach and also supports the act-frequency approach proposed by Buss and Craik (1980, 1981, 1983), in which prototypes for traits are established through behavioural counts. These authors view the independence of conventional rating scales as an artificial creation on the part of test constructors that in no way reflects reality.

Some controversy has arisen surrounding the interpretation of the factors comprising the interpersonal circle. Jackson and Helmes (1979) believe that an explanation in terms of a social desirability factor fits the data. Using simulated data, they found that responses generated by a threshold model of stylistic responding produced a circumplex structure independently of trait-content, with two stylistic dimensions being apparent. A third or general factor on which all variables load equally has been found by some researchers. This may account for between 6,5 % and 62,9 % of the variance and can clearly not be ignored (Wiggins, Steiger & Gaelick, 1981). Briar and Bieri (1963), along with Truckenmiller and Schaie (1979), give this factor a content explanation in terms of inferiority feelings, while a response set explanation has also been posited (Wiggins, Steiger & Gaelick, 1981). Either way, Wiggins, Steiger and Gaelick (1981) do not see this as undermining the control and affiliation dimensions, but recommend that this general factor be analyzed separately from data on circumplexity so as to avoid confounding the results.

LaForge and Suczek (1955) have stressed the importance of behaviourally validating the circumplex model in a test of its relation to behaviour in real-life settings, a challenge which has been taken up by Gifford and O'Connor (1987). Through the prediction of conversational patterns and preferred interpersonal distance, they convincingly demonstrate that the circumplex structure is in fact behaviourally based and represents more than just cognitive categories or artefacts of response bias.

b) Assessment with the Interpersonal Circle

The predictive utility of a circular model, such as Leary's or Kiesler's, lies in a set of rules defining complementarity which operationalizes the interactive nature of the model. Complementarity may be regarded as a tendency for people to respond reciprocally in an interaction. Leary describes interpersonal reciprocity as follows:

> Interpersonal reflexes tend (with a probability significantly greater than chance) to initiate or invite reciprocal interpersonal responses from the "other" person in the interaction that lead to a repetition of the original reflex. (1957, p. 123)

Leary did not provide specific rules for complementarity, and it took Carson (1969) to state explicitly what was intended:

> Generally speaking, complementarity occurs on the basis of reciprocity in respect to the dominance-submission axis (dominance tends to induce submission, and *vice versa*), and on the basis of correspondence in respect to the hate-love axis (hate induces hate, and love induces love). (p. 112)

Kiesler (1983) explains that our interpersonal actions may be viewed as attempts to elicit reactions from different groups of behaviour which "are complementary to our acts and that confirm our self-definitions" (p. 198). Mischel (1973, 1977a, 1979) regards the expectancies a person holds with regard to others as an important "person" variable in his social learning theory of human behaviour. It is these expectancies, Carson (1982) notes, which through self-fulfilling prophecies facilitate the confirmation of these self-definitions and in so doing create consistency in the behaviour of self and others. Lorr, Suziedelis and Kinnane (1969) suggest that interpersonal interactions can usefully be viewed as a social exchange in which the parties involved try to maximize the positive consequences for themselves with regard to both control and affiliation, which serve as the bargaining commodities. In this way the parties negotiate the amount of control each will have in the interaction, as well as the level of friendliness (Kiesler, 1983), and use these commodities to reaffirm their self-images or self-definitions.

According to Duke and Nowicki (1982), a comprehensive evaluation of an interaction has to incorporate at least three levels: the relational, the communicational and the situational. The relational level is concerned with the interaction at the level of the interpersonal styles of the participants; the communicational level refers to the degree of congruence or appropriateness of the communication; and the situational level provides information on the appropriateness of the interaction sequence. Together these components form what Duke and Nowicki (1982) refer to as a "total interactional constellation".

At the *relational* level we need to account for behaviour at the level of the interaction sequence, the interpersonal pattern and interpersonal style (Anchin,

1982). An interaction sequence, Anchin (1982) explains, is the most fundamental level and is defined as "the ongoing, reciprocally interconnected series of overt multichanneled behavioral exchanges which spins out during the finite time period over which the interaction transpires" (p. 101). Once combined with the covert affective and cognitive processes which are bound to the overt interaction, an exchange based on self-affirmation occurs. An individual's interpersonal pattern, as described by Anchin (1982), emerges in the "lawful interrelationships among his or her specific cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes as these spin out *vis-à-vis* classes of significant others under particular circumstances" (p. 107). Regularity, as observed over a number of interaction sequences with particular classes of persons, is the key to assessment at this level. Identifying an individual's interpersonal style requires a higher level of abstraction, and is intended as a summary of an individual's behaviour in terms of a "prototypical interpersonal pattern" (Anchin, 1982, p. 111). Although it is probable that most people are able to act or respond with behaviours from all segments of the circle, the basis for the use of the interpersonal circle in personality assessment is Leary's contention that each person has a preferred "interpersonal style", a favoured way of interacting with people. At each level a number of responses, not necessarily only complementary ones, are possible, the likelihood of each being determined by the degree to which individuals are free to deviate from their preferred ways of responding.

The nature of complementarity can thus not readily be ascertained as it relies on tendencies, and behaviour is furthermore the result of both the interpersonal situation *and* the interpersonal personality of those interacting (Bluhm, Widiger & Miele, 1990). Orford (1986) reviewed 11 studies pertaining to complementarity and concluded that behaviour is more complex and flexible

than would be expected from the theory, keeping in mind that while both Leary's and Kiesler's predictions represent only *tendencies*, a number of tendencies not suggested by the theory emerged. More specifically, Orford found that although predictions relating to friendly behaviour were fairly accurate, all predictions missed something with regard to hostility. This was however sufficiently ambiguous for Bluhm, Widiger and Miele (1990) to interpret the same data as supporting complementarity on the Affiliation but not on the Control dimension (see also Wright & Ingraham, 1985).

The assessment of interactions at the *communicational* and *situational* levels has frequently to be interlinked. Peterson (1982) explains that "at the interpersonal level, interactions are governed by rules, that is, the normative expectations members hold for the behaviour of those involved in the relationships" (p. 155). These rules, Peterson goes on to say, "are embedded in surrounding cultures . . . [and] opportunities for satisfaction and constraining demands are powerfully determined by the general environmental conditions within which interpersonal relationships develop" (p. 155). One problem to be overcome in this type of analysis is that, according to Kiesler (1983), his principle of complementarity refers "primarily to naturally occurring, relatively unstructured interpersonal situations" (pp. 208-209). Much of the research in this area is experimental and involves interactions which are quite clearly structured in terms of the expectations forming part of the interactions, and the effect of this on complementarity has yet to be determined.

Orford's review points to the strong influence of a number of factors such as role and status on results. Strong and his associates (1988) support this, noting that "different contingencies among behaviours in different interpersonal situations

would be expected as a function of differences in the values of causal variables operative in those situations" (p. 800). Orford, for example, found that with people in positions of relatively high status, friendly-dominance occurs regularly, no matter what the antecedent stimulus, leading Orford to suggest that preservation of one's status may be an important factor. This would also explain the tendency for the more threatening hostile-dominant behaviour to be met with like behaviour, while hostile-submissive behaviour, which is not as threatening, frequently elicits a friendly-dominant response. Bluhm, Widiger and Miele (1990) also suggest that friendliness may merely be occurring at its naturally high or pre-existing socially appropriate level, thus minimizing the interactive effects.

Strong and his colleagues (1988) point to the multiple determinacy of behaviour and implicate various contributory situational and individual factors, one such factor being knowledge of the other person. They explain that "people probably begin interactions with strangers cautiously and rather quickly modify their behaviour in the light of their growing knowledge of the other's characteristics" (p. 809). Duke and Nowicki (1982) hypothesize that on entering into a new relationship an individual relies initially on "a generalized expectancy that is based upon her or his experiences in meeting similar people for the first time" (p. 88). In terms of assessment that utilizes interpersonal simulations, as well as research in this field, which is frequently of a contrived nature, this has both advantages and disadvantages. Although the person's favoured interpersonal style will be most apparent in this early stage, stereotypical responses may render generalization questionable. This has frequently been overlooked and has major implications for the experimental nature of much of the work conducted in this area. External validation of the principles of complementarity is long overdue.

One further complication in research of this nature is that identified by Orford (1986) as the confusion between aggregated and single-step models of interaction. Orford sees a number of studies as being limited in that they deal only with the aggregation of behaviour over an extended period and not with specific responses. If, as Strong and his colleagues suggest, other people's behaviour merely *biases* our own, then this broader perspective is necessary. Any model based on interpersonal psychology thus has to incorporate a number of elements, which should include the relationship between the interactants in terms of status and degree of familiarity, as well as the sequence of progression that constitutes the immediate relationship.

The standard way of assessing interactions is through various inventories such as the Interpersonal Check List (LaForge & Suczek, 1955; Leary, 1957) in which the testees mark the interpersonal adjectives applicable to them; the adaptation by Lorr and McNair (1965) in terms of concrete descriptions of interpersonal behaviour in their Interpersonal Behaviour Inventory; or the Impact Message Inventory (IMI) (Perkins *et al.*, 1979) in which the testee indicates the feelings elicited by certain interactions. Adequate methodology suitable for addressing interactions has not been forthcoming. Any form of paper-and-pencil test can do no more than present a static representation of an end-product created through an interactive process. The means for studying dynamic interactions will, Kiesler (1982) believes, be provided in the form of stochastic analysis - "analysis of larger units of transaction between interactants representing longer temporal sequences, and statistical procedures which can identify redundant patterns that deviate from chance orderings" (p. 10). Benjamin (1974, 1979) has successfully applied Markov modelling to the analysis of sequences of

interactional behaviour, a process which involves the determination of the number of prior states necessary to predict behaviour at a present state.

Technology and methodology for the recording and subsequent analysis or categorization of interactive responses has, with few exceptions, also not been satisfactorily developed. Observational methods such as those used by Benjamin require the extensive participation of a trained observer and are better suited to a clinical setting. Computerization presents, at this point, an option worth investigating more fully. Malone (1975) attempted a computerized version of Leary's Interpersonal Circle, but it was an unsophisticated model, capable only of categorizing responses and not of interacting with the testee.

Terre Blanche (1988) has constructed a personality instrument, based on Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle, for use in vocational counselling. Using the computer, the testee interacts with fictional people displaying different interpersonal styles. Depending on the testee's response, the fictional people behave differently, meaning that each testee is in a sense presented with a different test that is partly of his own making and which is therefore suited to his own interpersonal style. The result is a lifelike, idiographic and truly interactive instrument. Terre Blanche validated his instrument on 120 vocational clients, but his results were unimpressive, showing little to commend the use of the interactive version over a static one in which the computer responded in a standard way to all testees.

A number of limitations of Terre Blanche's model are apparent: a) the theoretical foundation for the creation of the characters in terms of contributing factors such as length of association, status and so forth was not sufficiently

developed; b) each interaction sequence was too short to allow for sufficient negotiation of the levels of control and affiliation; c) the items were too subtle to be accorded the same meaning by all testees; d) an over-conservative algorithm meant that the test changed in response to the testee less than once in every five items; e) no evaluation of the test's content validity was performed; f) validation was not carried out in comparison with other assessment devices, but only against the static version, which may in itself have been an improvement over traditional measures; g) the scoring system did not facilitate the relation of results to a criterion measure; and h) alternative explanations, such as rigidity and social desirability, for a preponderance of responses from one quadrant of the circle were not ruled out. The instrument to be developed and presented in this dissertation will build on Terre Blanche's model but will attempt to overcome these limitations. The present study specifically addresses the content validity of the test, but also attempts to remedy the first three limitations mentioned above.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 THE TESTING RELATIONSHIP

Fundamentally, personality assessment may be regarded as a form of social relationship between tester and testee (Cronbach, 1984; Lanyon & Goodstein, 1982; Terre Blanche, 1988). However, trait theoretical approaches often fail to consider the nature of this relationship, which, from a more social psychological or cognitive perspective, is mediated by the presentation of the self, or impression management. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the nature and function of the self and the importance of recognizing the testing relationship as a *process*.

4.1 THE SELF (ITSELF)

Social psychology questions the assumption of the unity and structural completeness of the self as portrayed by trait theory. In the social psychological literature the self is regarded in two main ways: firstly as a complex, faceted structure composed of different aspects, such as the private, public and collective selves; and secondly as an information processor. Schlenker (1986), for instance, regards the self as "both a *structure*, containing the organized, relatively stable contents of one's personal experiences, and an active *process* that guides and regulates one's thoughts, feelings, and actions" (p. 21).

4.1.1 Self as Structure

Trait theory puts forward the belief that a person's "true" personality can be measured, subject to the circumvention of impression management, a term originally used by Tedeschi, Schlenker and Bonoma (1971) to refer to "the individual's need to maintain credibility for purposes of social influence" (p. 691). In contrast, self-related approaches identify different selves - the private and the public - each with their own ego-tasks. Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) describe the ego-task of the public self as social accreditation and that of the private self as guidance by internal standards. Whereas self-presentational processes are viewed by trait theorists as obstacles to be overcome in reaching the goal of assessment, social psychologists see the public self, or "the self as it is projected in one's social life" (Schlenker, 1986, p. 21), as an integral part of the self. In this view there is no "true" self, but only different representations forming *a* self (see Baumeister & Tice, 1986 for a view which includes an "actual self").

Tetlock and Manstead (1985) cogently argue, on both theoretical and methodological grounds, that research aimed at separating intrapsychic from impression management or from self-presentation effects should be abandoned in favour of the development of "an integrative theoretical framework that focuses on basic processes common to both categories of explanation" (p. 72). This framework should also aim at identifying the boundary conditions in which each theory applies. Similarly, Schlenker (1986) motivates for an integrated approach to the private and public selves. Schlenker's solution is the creation of the concept of self-identification - the expression of one's identity - which refers to "activities (thoughts or behaviours) that occur in particular social contexts and are multiply determined" (p. 32). Specifically, the actor's

personality and goals, the ion and any relevant audience all interact to produce a given self-identification at any one time. This is a bidirectional process, however, as the resultant self-identification influences each contributing factor. Clearly, Schlenker's conception of personality refers not to a collection of traits or behaviours, but to a central core of images about the self and the world that have stabilized through use and validation and are therefore more likely to be salient in any particular self-identification.

Empirical support for the position that impression management is not entirely responsible for one's self-presentation is provided in a study by Breckler and Greenwald (cited in Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984), who found that favourable judgements about the self are made just as quickly as unfavourable ones, suggesting that subjects do not spend time in deliberate fabrication. Jones and Sigall (1979) studied self-presentations generated through the bogus pipe-line procedure in which subjects believed that the truthfulness of their responses could be determined, and found that the role played by impression management was small. The goals of the actor may nevertheless be important, and Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) suggest that in some situations the motivation may be strong to present a favourable self-identification, such as that of "successful professional" in an employment interview. The greater the importance this holds for the individual, the less likely is his self-identification to be influenced by personality-type factors and the more it will involve audience and situational effects. This is no more or less a "truer" self than any other, but its determination in terms of the contributing factors differs. Personality asseessment can benefit from a recognition of the self as a complex, faceted structure. It is postulated that the elicitation and assessment of a particular, relevant self-identification will have greater utility in relation to the assessment

question than will the undifferentiated perspective taken by traditional assessment procedures.

4.1.2 Self as Process

The motives of the self in organizing information and in creating certain self-identifications are determined by a number of factors which include various cognitive biases. Greenwald (1980) presents research evidence for the cognitive biases of egocentricity - "self perceived as more central to events than it is"; beneffectance - "self perceived as selectively responsible for desired, but not undesired, outcomes"; and conservatism - "resistance to cognitive change" (p. 604). Swann and Ely (1987) discuss the role of the self-conception in controlling and predicting the social world of an individual and suggest that although people tend to seek self-enhancement, equally as important is their striving for self-consistency. This "coherent view of self" can, as Arkin and Baumgardner (1986) suggest, be achieved by making adjustments either to the private or the public self in order to solicit consistency in the reactions of others so that they are compatible with one's self-concept. Rhodewalt (1986) points out that consistency of feedback is acquired fairly readily, firstly because of the constant nature of the available self-images, and secondly because through their role in the creation of the environment, other people tend to see them in a limited and repetitive range of situations, resulting in the maintenance of stability within one's self. The bias of egocentricity similarly has the effect of producing perceived consistency in the behaviour of others, as this is interpreted with regard to one's own consistent self. The conservatism bias, Greenwald

(1980) maintains, preserves the organization of knowledge by the self through ensuring continuity in coding and storing information.

Although cognitive biases help to maintain a coherent self-view, they also contribute to a knowledge system which is at times composed of inaccurate information (Greenwald, 1980). This has important implications for personality assessment. Although the self-related information may be said to be inaccurate, it is nonetheless subjectively real. The difficulty lies in ascertaining its degree of accuracy when compared to another - different - reality, because aspects of individual processes of self-presentation are themselves important aspects of personality (Snyder, 1983). As Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) observe, "the problem of identifying the uniqueness of each subject's self in the reactive format of psychometrically based tests is formidable" (p. 156). The resolution of these problems requires an acknowledgement of the extent of ego-involvement in various tasks and an awareness of the self as a process of organization, which together form a person's self-identification.

4.2 THE SELF AS KNOWER

Texts on personality assessment routinely include the cautionary observation that any assessment based on questionnaires is valid only to the extent that the individual is capable of making accurate self-observations (cf. Anastasi, 1988). One of the major shortcomings of personality assessment is an unwillingness on the part of test constructors to allow the testee to make these observations, thereby constituting a failure to engage with the self as Knower - an active,

process-oriented entity as opposed to an undifferentiated object characterized by content-oriented passivity. Greenwald and Pratkanis (1984) suggest that if our knowledge of the self, as such, could be regarded as scientifically complete, there would be no place for a subjective self as Knower. Psychology - in so far as it can be regarded as the science of the mind - can do no more than tend toward its ultimately objective goal which, courtesy of the uniqueness of each individual, is as unattainable as infinity itself. It is the self as Knower which Greenwald and Pratkanis refer to as the unexplained (and never fully explainable) portion of a person, the part which constitutes an individual's uniqueness and which presents personality assessors with the challenge of meeting its goal of *understanding*.

The perceived need for a focus on the organization of knowledge cannot be equated with the subjective experience in an existential sense. Open-ended techniques, such as McGuire and Padawer-Singer's (1976) use of the "Tell us about yourself" technique, sentence completion and other projective techniques, do not reveal cognitive structure and produce iterations that must still be interpreted, either intuitively or from the established framework of the investigator. The aim in both cases is idiographic, but they differ with regard to the strategy employed.

4.3 THE SELF IN PERSPECTIVE

Of further importance to personality assessment is Markus's (1983) depiction of a number of "possible selves", each of which may be activated or cued by social events or processes to organize a set of information in a specific way and hence to shape future reactions. Within an assessment context, different aspects of the

self may be salie different times (Sherman, Judd & Park, 1989), depending on factors which include not only the present context (Markus, 1983), but also the immediately preceding events in terms of the determination of category accessibility (Sherman, Judd & Park, 1989; Srull & Wyer, 1980), the individual's personal interpretation of the situation (Tesser & Moore, 1986) and the person's emotional response to it (Natale & Hantis, 1982). Assessment thus addresses only what Rhodewalt (1986, after Jones & Gerard, 1967) refers to as a "phenomenal self" - the self as it is currently experienced, incorporating "a summary statement of the self-relevant information that is currently accessible" (1986, p. 122). The phenomenal self is clearly not a static entity, but is engaged in continuous but selective interaction with the world and evolves accordingly to incorporate new experiences. An example of the way this works is provided by Markus (1983), who explains that once an "unsuccessful" self has been aroused, forthcoming situations will be viewed from this perspective, making negative self-knowledge highly accessible. Aggregation over a number of test occasions, the commonly proposed solution, may result in a meaningless amalgamation of these "possible selves". Taking the social context into account may to some extent prompt appropriately specific representational schemata, but clearly has to acknowledge a more complex and individualistic process than has hitherto been accounted for in personality assessment.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

If the discipline of personality assessment in general is in a state of crisis, then its status in South Africa can only be described as catastrophic. The problems surrounding the prevailing psychological tradition in South Africa, which largely relate to the imposition of a Westernized psychology on all members of a multicultural society, are so extensive as to appear insurmountable. An absence of any willingness to understand individuals of another culture prevails, and analyses of blacks such as the following abound:

> Statutory discrimination leads to feelings of inferiority and revolt against the Whites. This aggression must often be masked by submissiveness and loyalty - ground for neurosis, antisocial behaviour, and crime. Feelings of inferiority inevitably lead to an identity crisis and this disintegration of the self-image and self-respect does not only lead to forms of neurosis but often even to deviations of a psychotic nature. (Minnaar, 1976, p. 5)

If this description had been written in 1940 we could perhaps put it behind us. Written as it was in 1976, it should cause us some concern. The chain of simple cause-and-effect statements in this extract is based on stereotypes and stems from a paternalistic approach to research in which white supremacy is assumed. Any analysis of the subjective experience which results from exposure to statutory discrimination - the instigating factor in the chain - is noticeably absent. Instead the analysis concentrates only on the resultant factors observed from a white perspective in terms of inferiority, crime and neurosis.

It is conceded that in some quarters there is an awareness of the need for sensitive, culturally appropriate, relevant research which does not alienate the people it wishes to work with or study. Holdstock (1981), for instance, writes that "whereas critical appraisal forms part of traditional psychology at its point of origin, ours has been a blind acceptance of and obedience to the premises of a psychology laid down on foreign soil" (pp. 123-124). On a theoretical level, numerous writers have questioned the relevance of psychology as it exists in South Africa at present, and many different approaches have been taken with a view to overcoming the limitations and to making psychology relevant (Retief, 1989). Sechrest (1987) and Strümpfer (1981) would use scientific method as a vehicle for engineering culturally appropriate applications in psychology, taking what Mauer and Retief (1987) refer to as a "disengaged" approach. Others, from an "engaged" perspective, take an approach sharing much in common with social constructionism (Gergen, 1985) in demanding that psychology abandon its empiricist position of moral neutrality in favour of one in which it is held accountable to society. Within this approach, bids for the contextualization of psychology (Dawes, 1985), for a recognition of the need to account for social change in our analyses (Gilbert, 1989) and for an emphasis on the importance of fostering more open communication between cultures (Holdstock, 1981) have been made.

Personality assessment became institutionalized in South Africa largely from a need for personnel selection and placement during the Second World War (Louw, 1987), and its role as part of a capitalist society has not gone unquestioned. Muller, Cloete and Orkin (1986) criticize psychological research in South Africa generally, and in particular that of the NIPR, as remaining within a technicist position which promotes the functioning of a capitalist society

and in so doing, contributing toward the maintenance of the *status quo*. Pieterson (1989) similarly sees industrial psychological research in South Africa as being in danger of becoming a slave to capitalism in that it loses much of the person in its preoccupation with control and prediction, having little to commend it in terms of generating new, more appropriate theories.

Berry (1983) stresses the importance of a systems approach to assessment in which the context provides valuable information. The broad ecological framework must of necessity form a part of any analysis if it is to be of use to the people it attempts to describe. The changes taking place in South Africa present a number of challenges to those attempting to assess cognitive ability and personality, thus providing even more reason for them to emerge from the cocoon of complacency which surrounds this discipline and to take note of what is happening around them. T.R. Taylor (1990) has identified a number of factors that have contributed to this need for revision. He explains that as the political climate changes and people reach an awareness of the need for this country to look to a post-apartheid society, there will increasingly be far greater integration in the work place. Whereas previously it was uncommon to find members of different race groups applying for the same jobs, this is rapidly becoming the norm, making cross-cultural comparisons on psychometric tests an inevitability which has to be provided for. Pressure from minority groups, previously ignored, is now being added to the voice of disapproval from overseas, making fairness in selection a crucial issue, to be overlooked at the employer's peril. These factors, Taylor argues, together with the economic necessity of expanding the extant white male national labour pool, necessitate a long-overdue critical examination and rethinking of our psychometric practices. Such a revision should be able to claim relevance and, while contributing toward the effective

functioning of an industrial society, should not discriminate in any way which overlooks the standing of any particular individual.

5.1 ASSESSING PERSONALITY CROSS-CULTURALLY

Criticism of traditional assessment procedures from interpretive and social constructionist perspectives are particularly relevant to cross-cultural assessment (Jones & Thorne, 1987). From an interpretive viewpoint, if it can be said that individuals *within* a culture cannot be relied on to have shared meanings which can be tapped, this will surely be exacerbated between members of *different* cultures. Within an interpretive framework, "the co-occurrences that are often presumed to be universal in traditional research are viewed as being more temporary, situated in the vicissitudes of particular social processes" (Jones & Thorne, 1987, p. 491). The social meaning of events is similarly of importance in a constructionist approach, which "invites the view that prevailing categories of understanding are historically and culturally situated and are therefore subject to critique and transformation" (Jones & Thorne, 1987, p. 491).

These observations have a bearing on the emic-etic debate (Berry, 1969), or its various linguistic equivalents, which may be regarded as lying at the heart of cross-cultural assessment. *Etic*, or universal, constructs are necessary if comparisons are to be made between cultures, but are not always appropriate in a given culture and leave *emic*, or culture-specific, constructs untapped. Measuring emic constructs, particularly across a language barrier, is a difficult undertaking, made more so by the investigator's reliance on a personal interpretive framework, as well as through the loss of meaningful information

through the statistical reduction of data in the absence of an adequate level of understanding. Psychological research shows a distinct lack of innovation when carried out cross-culturally. The end result is frequently the application of existing tests developed in one culture to a new culture in what has been termed an imposed-etic (Berry, 1969) or pseudo-etic (Triandis, 1972) approach. This wholesale transfer of tests from one culture to another without adequate follow-up, determination of comparability or establishment of new norms is probably quite unjustified (Sinha, 1983). The ability of a test or instrument to generate valid and useful comparisons depends on the extent to which they can be said to be equivalent or comparable across two or more cultures.

5.1.1 Equivalence

Malpass and Poortinga (1986) define cross-cultural equivalence as follows:

> Corresponding sets of data obtained in different populations can be called equivalent when in each population the functional relationship between the scale of the observed scores and the scale of the universe of generalization is identical. (p. 69)

Establishing comparability is no simple matter, however, and although the use of terminology in the literature is inconsistent, there are four main types of equivalence, namely conceptual, functional, metric and scalar, each one with requirements more stringent than the last (Poortinga & Van der Vijver, 1987; Van der Vijver & Poortinga, 1982). *Conceptual* equivalence is a somewhat abstract concept referring to the existence of broad concepts such as "personality", and has little practical value for assessment purposes. *Functional* comparability requires that subjects in different cultures have the same

understanding of the behaviours or concepts being measured (Poortinga & Van der Vijver, 1987). In this regard, Berry (1980) indicates that "the researcher must search for and discover the local meaning of concepts within the cognitive systems of the people and groups being compared" (p. 9). The concern is thus with the existence of a trait and the relationships between traits, and can be established without the use of identical instruments in two cultures as the range of behaviours that can act as indicators in different cultures may be diverse (Poortinga & Malpass, 1986).

Metric equivalence is a more stringent requirement and demands that the scales comprise the same items and that the data exhibit the same patterns of coherence and structure across cultures (Berry, 1980). As Van der Vijver and Poortinga (1982) explain, this means that although the metric properties are the same in the different cultures, the zero-points are not necessarily equal, making direct score comparisons impossible. When the zero-points fall in the same place, making comparisons of absolute scores possible, *scalar* equivalence may be said to exist. For the requirement of scalar equivalence to be met it has to be shown that all items are free from bias (Humphreys, 1986). Item bias is present when "intergroup differences are not in agreement with expectations based on the response patterns for the other items in the same instrument" (Malpass & Poortinga, 1986, p. 69) and is perhaps the most difficult type of bias to eliminate convincingly because bias that pervades all items cannot be detected with conventional methods. Only through knowledge of the status of a test on each of these forms of equivalence, as well as on the prediction of relevant criteria, can its suitability for use in a multicultural society be determined.

The issue of comparability mirrors to some extent the criticisms directed at trait theory: a) that tests may be attempting to measure constructs that are unimportant to a person; and b) that different test items may not be tapping the same construct in all people, thereby ignoring the relativity of psychological measurement. In South Africa a number of recent investigations (Owen, 1989a, 1986b; J.M. Taylor & Radford, 1986) have found that bias exists in the cognitive domain, particularly when test scores are related to a performance criterion. Factors such as stylistic modes of responding, item bias and differences in opportunities have been put forward as explanations for this bias. The relationship between personality test scores and any criterion measure is a more difficult one to ascertain than that in the cognitive domain, requiring a reliance on psychometric criteria which may not adequately express this relationship. Although low reliability coefficients may provide reason to question the suitability of the test for that culture (White, 1982), adequte reliability indices may not be sufficient in establishing comparability. Guthrie *et al.* (1983) found important differences in the meanings of items and scales with Filipino subjects, even though reliabilities, as well as the equivalence of factorial structures, were satisfactory. In a South African study, Taylor and Radford (1986) similarly found considerable test bias between groups of blacks and whites despite the fact that the reliability and validity coefficients were adequate within groups. However, the criterion measure for blacks and whites in this study may not have been the same, as performance at different educational institutions was used. In the personality field, bias should be sought at the level of the test, individual items and in all aspects of the testing situation (Taylor & Radford, 1986). In order to minimize the effects of bias, alternative explanations of cross-cultural differences should be explicitly considered and, where possible, ruled out (Malpass & Poortinga, 1986).

5.2 APPROACHES TO TESTING: EMIC OR ETIC

Although pseudo-etic measurement provides a *convenient* basis for making cross-cultural comparisons, it does so at the possible cost of the validity of the test and does not necessarily say anything meaningful about an individual in his or her world. Whereas the search for universals is seen to be a legitimate endeavour by some writers (Berry, 1969; Biesheuvel, 1987a; Brislin, 1980, 1986), others see more value in an emic strategy (Bhana, 1987; Sin[illegible], 1983). A number of solutions in the form of approaches to testing have been proposed which tend toward one or the other of these aims and respond to the problems caused by the need to establish equivalence. Three of these which will be considered are the establishment of new norms, which is a simple, pseudo-etic response; the development of culture-specific tests; and the creation of hybrid, or emic-etic, tests.

5.2.1 Re-Norming Tests

Applying different norms to different subgroups of the population in terms of age or gender shows a recognition of the developmental lifecycle and the (not uncontested) psychological and sociological differences between males and females. When applied to cross-cultural assessment this approach takes on any one of a number of meanings. Either the investigator has reason to believe that the requirements for metric equivalence have been met; or *assumes* that the requirements have been met; or has reason to believe that the conditions for metric equivalence, and possibly for functional equivalence as well, have been violated, but believes that the test can be salvaged by establishing predictive

equivalence. Unlike the generation of different norms for different age groups, or even for different genders, re-norming tests by race or ethnic group is not without political implications in terms of the emotive impact of dividing people up along racial lines. A number of practical problems have also to be overcome and ultimately the success of this approach depends on the sensitivity and awareness of the investigator.

For norms to have meaning, people have to be divided up into relatively homogeneous groups, which presents a monumental problem in accounting for the decision as to how - and where - to draw the line. Sundberg and Gonzales (1981) have noted the importance of identifying not only different race groups, but ethnic subgroups as well. Jones and Thorne (1987) caution that "should such variation be recognized, we would be confronted with an array of new norms for many different population subgroups and with a growing proliferation of a psychotechnology that places us at an ever increasing distance from the subject of our inquiry" (p. 489). Re-norming tests is an approach which presents a static view of society (Jones & Thorne, 1987) and does not account for acculturation, a process which moreover does not affect all individuals equally or in the same way (Berry, Trimble & Olmedo, 1986), leaving some in the ambiguous territory of no man's land. The danger exists that a personality questionnaire may end up as a measure only of how "white" a black person is, and after considering the role played by education, urbanization, demographics and so on, the psychologist may be placed in the rather unsatisfactory position of having to decide which set of norms to apply, either based on a multitude of increasingly vague criteria or by first establishing an individual's "subjective culture" in the manner described by Triandis (1972).

J.M. Taylor and Radford (1986) take a different view, suggesting that in South Africa the legislative structure and history that allow and perpetuate the disadvantagement of certain ethnic groups make this the proper focus, with individual differences in socio-economic status (SES), for example, being relatively unimportant at this stage. If, as T.R. Taylor (1987) suggests, SES is highly correlated with race, the possibility of using this as a variable to replace race should be seriously considered. While still permitting testing to be used to promote black advancement, this approach would effectively deracialize the procedure, rendering it more ideologically acceptable to the greater majority of South Africans and complying with the non-racial policy of the African National Congress (ANC). This reclassification of individuals also overcomes the limitation of a norm-centered approach's being able to represent only a static view of society. Although the lower SES strata would initially be occupied almost exclusively by blacks, this situation will hopefully change in the forseeable future with blacks moving up into the higher SES categories and therefore being evaluated on SES norms derived from multiracial samples. Whereas the advantage of this approach is apparent with regard to cognitive testing, it is possible that differences in personality attributable to culture will persist even once the contaminating factor of opportunity is eliminated. Solutions are urgently needed as, at present in South Africa, establishing new norms is the favoured way of dealing with incomparability and is widely used with tests such as the South African Personality Questionnaire (SAPQ) and Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF). Little else is being done in terms of establishing the extent or type of incomparability, and the *assumption* that equivalence can usefully be regained through the re-norming of tests forms part of the foundation for testing in South Africa.

5.2.2 Culture-Specific Approaches

An emic strategy has much in common with idiographic ideals in that the aim is to identify the meaning that a subject - or member of a culture - places on the world, without the imposition of a structure. However, in emic assessment the emphasis is on ascertaining the *shared* experiences of the members of the culture as far as this is possible. This goal is not easily reached, and Sinha (1983) decries the absence of new tests tailored for a specific culture, the creation of which he believes should be a priority in cross-cultural research. A number of proposals, both theoretical and practical, have been put forward in order to address the perceived need for an indigenous psychology. Church and Katigbak (1988) used natural language concepts to elicit relevant constructs. Brislin (1980) suggests that emic constructs be determined through group discussions with members of the other culture and with professionals familiar with the culture, and also advocates the analysis of folklore. Kline (1983) likens the emic approach to a cultural equivalent of the Repertory Grid Test (Kelly, 1955, 1970) whereby the researcher aims at eliciting behaviour and constructs as they are construed by members of the culture themselves. While Kline intended this as an analogy, the Rep Test holds considerable promise for cross-cultural research, either to elicit constructs for inclusion in a personality questionnaire or as a form of assessment in itself. Irvine and Carroll (1980) see an unstructured approach such as this as providing "some degree of *a priori* construct validity" (p. 232). Du Preez and Ward (1970), in a South African application of these sentiments, report the successful use of the Rep Grid technique with a group of Xhosa men. They note its ability to overcome many of the language difficulties and recommend its use even with an illiterate population.

Assessing personality with an approach tending toward emic rather than etic is not without problems - not the least of which is the enforced abandoning of the means for making direct comparisons. Objectivity - one of the main advantages of personality questionnaires - may at times have to be sacrificed, allowing the introduction of bias which may be difficult to control. The difficulties discussed in the previous section with regard to the problem of determining the extent of group homogeneity, as well as the ideological dilemma resulting from using race as a means of categorization, apply equally to the creation of culture-specific tests. With the exception of a number of attempts at the creation of emic-based projective tests, many of which are nothing more than pseudo-etic impositions, South African researchers have not applied themselves to the development of culture-specific tests. Regrettably, this does not seem to be from any ideological awareness of the possible implications, but from a blatant disregard of cultural differences, again resting on the assumption that these are not of great consequence.

5.2.3 Emic-Etic Approaches

Emic-etic approaches represent an attempt to retain the capacity for making comparisons between cultures while at the same time acknowledging cultural diversity. Although a variety of approaches are possible, the emphasis is typically on the etic side of the hyphen, with mere gestures being made toward avoiding culture-loadedness - of language and expression, for instance. Little progress above validation in a purely pseudo-etic fashion has been made. It has been suggested (Berry, 1969, 1980; Brislin, 1980, 1986) that research begin with an etic system, with modifications being made until an acceptable emic description is

achieved. If the nature of the etic concept has not been changed too radically, then comparison is still possible. Attempts have been made (Miller, Slomczynski & Schoenberg, 1981) to create instruments with constructs measured by a common core of items which is supplemented emically. The difficulty here lies in determining whether the construct retains its meaning if culture-specific indicators are excluded and whether functional equivalence can be maintained when nation-specific indicators are added (Miller *et al.*, 1981). Nevertheless it is an approach which has potential and may solve many cross-cultural problems.

5.3 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF TESTS CURRENTLY IN USE

A survey currently being undertaken by the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA, 1990) will provide valuable information about the extent of the usage of the different tests available. Until such time as these results are made available, speculation will have to suffice. The Psi-Test system of the NIPR includes four personality tests: The South African Personality Questionnaire (SAPQ), Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF), The Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ) and the Structured Objective Rorschach Test (SORT) (Tredoux, 1990). Other tests in use are various projective techniques including the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and its variants, as well as the Rorschach. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) are also used in various sectors. The dearth of cross-cultural validity and bias studies pertaining to these tests is little short of alarming, but has only recently come to be viewed as such. The two main

approaches to personality assessment in South Africa - projective techniques and factorially based tests - will be discussed in turn.

5.3.1 The Use of Projective Techniques in South Africa

The use of projective techniques cross-culturally has been proposed as a way of contextualizing information about personality (Goodenough, 1980). Based on the principle that people project their innermost, as well as more overt, reactions and emotions into their responses to ambiguous stimuli (Rapaport, Gill & Schafer, 1979), projective techniques may be viewed as a way of gaining a holistic view of a person, uncontaminated by the assumptions and expectations of the investigator (Lindzey, 1961). This cannot be uncritically accepted however, and some of the problems identified in the literature concern the often overlooked need to identify the circumstances of testing, the influence of non-personality factors such as culture in anything but a stereotypical way, as well as the difficulties arising when testing across a language barrier. Much of the research on projective instruments fails to question the assumptions underlying the methodology employed, particularly in terms of establishing functional and stimulus equivalence.

In a fairly sophisticated analysis, Retief (1987) differentiates between projective tests of inclusion and those of selection. A test of inclusion embodies the traditional attitude to projective testing whereby an extensive variety of stimuli is presented, enabling the testee to project virtually anything into them. The difficulty here lies in the interpretation of responses, as investigators not totally *au fait* with the culture (and even those who are) may inadvertently impose their

own inaccurate interpretation on the test responses (Retief, 1987), making for a combined and invalid projective effort by both the tester and the testee. The alternative - tests of selection - present stimuli designed to tap certain areas of functioning, such as interpersonal relations, in terms of specified constructs such as the need for affiliation. Responses can then be interpreted and categorized in terms of a predetermined scoring system. Retief emphasizes that this "makes the transmission of meanings easier to trace and aims at greater interpretive reliability" (p. 53). All that this requires is "the identification of relatively concrete concepts that are not too difficult to operationalize in terms of observable behaviours, and that 'translate' equally well into constructs that are relevant to the cultures being compared" (Retief, 1987, p. 53). TAT pictures may in this sense be regarded as operationalizations of specific constructs and are subject to the same difficulties as personality questionnaires - masked dangerously as "idiographic", open-ended techniques which aim at eliciting solely subjective, experiential accounts from a subject. These problems have not been overlooked in the literature and projective testing should be viewed in the context of Lindzey's (1961) warning that projective techniques should not be applied without first establishing their construct validity in the new culture and Holtzman's (1980) observation that the stimuli may be culture-bound and may not exhibit semantic equivalence in the new culture.

Against this background, and in order to illustrate some of the difficulties with projective testing, we will turn to some South African developments of TAT series, of which there are five, namely those by Lee (1948, 1953), Sherwood (1957), De Ridder (1961), Baran (1970) and Erasmus (1976). In creating these series, each researcher has recognized the need to adapt the TAT for use with black South Africans, but in many ways these developments fall short of their

goal. The studies all have in common the incorporation of the researcher's stereotypical expectations of blacks, even when an attempt was made to avoid this. The areas of interest and the constructs to be measured are typically determined by the researcher, and although Baran (1970) took care to determine that the cards elicited material relevant to the intended construct, no attention was paid in any of the series to the salience of these constructs in the population. It is with regard to stimulus selection however that these studies appear as seriously methodologically unsound. Lee (1948, 1953) attempted to present stimuli relevant to the indigenous culture by using the fantasies generated by black inmates of a mental hospital. The relevance and generalizability of these stimuli can be questioned for, as Baran (1970) notes, at least five of the cards contain stimuli which appear to be peculiar to reality as experienced by the inmates.

The first series of TAT cards to be designed for industrial use in South Africa was that of De Ridder (1961), who developed a series for the selection of bus drivers. Evidence of criterion validity is however extremely vague and grossly inadequate. This series is also an exemplification of the extent to which racial stereotypes can be incorporated into both the stimuli and interpretation of projective tests. From responses to a card representing a hand holding money, for instance, De Ridder concludes that "money obsession has tended to have assumed the status of almost an end in itself", and goes on to attribute this to "individual selfishness and personal greed" (p. 90), which he sees as being characteristic of the black population. Clearly the stimulus pull of such a card is so great that responses dealing with anything but money are decisively excluded (Baran, 1970; Retief, 1987).

The TAT-Z was devised by Erasmus (1976) of the HSRC for use in employment selection and concentrates on the attitudes of blacks to whites, and particularly to white authority. The responses to the cards are scored for the expression of negative and positive attitudes and are weighted according to the employer's perception of their relevance to the job. A final score of suitability emerges from this procedure, a score which largely reflects the degree of hostility and assertiveness or submission shown by the subject, a result which is not made explicit. Its use in industry has been questioned (Nunns & Kruger, 1983), and Retief (1987) notes that the widespread (white) support for the use of the TAT-Z for selection purposes cannot in this case be regarded as evidence of its validity or utility and is instead, "evidence of the pervasiveness of discrimination" (p. 51). Regarding subservience as a critical quality of a black employee, says Retief, "constitutes a bias that is scientifically indefensible and that ultimately rests on an ideological base" (p. 51).

The Structured Objective Rorschach Test (SORT) is, as its name suggests, an objectively scored variant of the Rorschach test. It takes the form of three possible responses, presented as a description of each inkblot, of which the testee must choose one. This test has been adapted for use with white South Africans (Blaas, 1975), and while little has been done to establish its predictive validity, research, though producing mixed results, has generally found support for its concurrent and content validity (Louw, 1978). Research with the SORT has not been conducted cross-culturally and its application in this regard is therefore questionable. All the advantages of projective techniques in allowing the subject to provide the context in which responses are to be assessed, are lost. The specific nature of the responses makes it probable that meanings will not be cross-culturally transferable and, without validation of this test for other ethnic

groups, its use with subject groups other than the white population for which it was developed seems totally indefensible.

These South African applications of projective techniques may be viewed as a parody of the projective paradigm, an evaluation which has as much to do with the outlook and prejudices of the test constructors and users as it does with the methodological difficulties inherent in using projective instruments cross-culturally. This section on projective techniques has been included to complete the picture on personality assessment, as well as to highlight one of the main advantages of structured tests - their objectivity. Clearly the loss of precision in questionnaires is countered by their objectivity, wheras the opposite is true of projective tests, whether based on principles of selection or inclusion, and also of other phenomenological techniques. Alternatively this position can be viewed as support for a belief that bias, which in more objective tests is psychometrically detectable, goes unobserved and unexplained in projective tests. Neither approach should necessarily be discarded, however, and we should bear in mind Berry's (1980) dictum that "the appropriate method depends upon both the question being asked and the cultural group in which it is studied; there is no methodological superiority inherent in any one strategy" (p. 22).

5.3.2 Factorially-Based Personality Questionnaires

Retief (1987) has expressed concern over the use of factorially-based personality questionnaires in South Africa, but few studies have been carried out to determine the appropriateness of various instruments. The Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ), for example, has been validated only for white samples (Carstens, 1987; Du Toit, 1983). Any evaluation of tests in the absence of data

specific to them must rely on evidence from other, similarly constructed tests which rest on the same assumptions. Slightly more attention has been paid to the South African Personality Questionnaire (SAPQ), but for other tests, such as Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF) and Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), we must rely on cross-cultural research conducted in countries other than South Africa, again because of the dearth of research in our own country.

a) The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

In acknowledgement of the difficulties surrounding a pseudo-etic approach, an attempt can be made to show through factor analysis that the constructs being measured retain the same structure in the new culture. H.J. Eysenck and his colleagues (H.J. Eysenck & M.W. Eysenck, 1985; S.B.G. Eysenck, 1983) have found the structure of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to be remarkably replicable in over 20 different countries. However, Bijnen, Van der Net and Poortinga (1986) successfully replicated the structure, according to Eysenck's criteria, using random data, and they suggest that these criteria may not be stringent enough to indicate factor congruence. They also note that Eysenck and his colleagues tend to brush aside what may be regarded as major fluctuations in factor-loading patterns and response rates, seeing these as nothing more than minor variations in an otherwise congruent structure. Bijnen, Van der Net and Poortinga argue that these fluctuations are sufficient to suggest the presence of bias. Furthermore, even when factors appear to be the same, subtle shifts in meaning may well have occurred (Guthrie *et al.*, 1983). Studies comparing factor structures cross-culturally are further problematic in that, by excluding possible emic items, they are biased toward finding universality or

similarity (Church & Katigbak, 1988). The saliency of the construct in the new culture also remains undetermined in this kind of study (Trimble, Lonner & Boucher, 1983).

Bijnen and Poortinga (1988) refer to the absence of metric equivalence, treated lightly by Eysenck, as constituting a major problem. S.B.G. Eysenck (1983) notes that items that load on one scale in one culture frequently load on an entirely different scale in another culture, necessitating the development of new scoring keys. In order to make cross-cultural comparisons possible, Eysenck recommends that only those items loading on the same factor in both cultures be used for the purpose of comparison. That items from one scale should by chance load on another scale calls into question the independence of the scales and the original sampling of the items. Church and Katigbak (1988) observe that this also results in a truncated sampling of constructs, rendering the content validity of the scales in both cultures suspect. Supplementing these scales with emic items, as Church and Katigbak suggest, is a possible solution provided that functional equivalence can be demonstrated.

The lack of both functional and metric equivalence of the EPQ warrants great caution when applying this test within the South African context. The problems in establishing the congruency of factor structures and in establishing functional and metric equivalence apply equally to all factorially-based questionnaires and should be kept in mind in the use of this sort of test in any cross-cultural assessment procedure.

b) *The South African Personality Questionnaire*

The South African Personality Questionnaire (SAPQ), a factorially-based personality questionnaire of 150 items, standardized and validated for white South Africans, was developed by Steyn in 1974. Two studies have addressed its appropriateness for use with black subjects - both found it wanting. Spence (1982) administered the SAPQ to a group of black South African teachers and found that the coefficient alpha reliabilities for the five scales ranged from 0,23 to 0,48, which are unacceptably low. Item reliabilities fared similarly. When subjected to item analysis only 11 items of the original 150 met Steyn's criteria for acceptance in terms of item skewness and correlations between an item and its own scale, as well as with the other scales. Spence then removed all items with unacceptably low coefficients, raising the reliability coefficients of the scales to between 0,31 and 0,68, which are generally regarded as unsatisfactory. These sets of data present a strong case for the inappropriateness of the SAPQ for this sample, a finding which may generalize to other black samples.

A more elaborate assessment of bias in the SAPQ was undertaken by T.R. Taylor and Boeyens (1990), who rigorously investigated both the construct comparability and the item comparability of this test. They used a multimethod, multisample approach, with the sample comprising two black groups (n = 136; n = 123) and two white groups (n = 193; n = 188). The alpha reliabilities for all four groups reached Steyn's criterion of 0,8 on both the Social Responsiveness and Dominance scales, while on the Hostility scale this criterion was met only for the white samples. On the remaining two scales - Anxiety and Rigidity - this criterion was not met for any of the samples, with figures for the black samples

dropping as low as 0,55 and 0,65 for Rigidity and 0,58 and 0,70 for Anxiety. The reliabilities of all scales were higher for the white samples, this difference being most substantial on the Anxiety, Hostility and Rigidity scales. These reliability coefficients indicate "either that the constructs were less effectively measured in the black samples, or that the constructs had less integrity in these samples" (Taylor & Boeyens, 1990, p. 88). However, this disparity does not seem serious enough to cause alarm. It is encouraging that the data from exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis indicate reasonable comparability of constructs in three of the samples, with only the fourth - one of the black samples - differing substantially, mainly with regard to the relationships between Anxiety, Hostility and Rigidity.

The percentages of items in each scale found in item analysis to be incomparable in black-white comparisons are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Percentages of incomparable items for the SAPQ scales.

Scale	Incomparable Items (%)
Social Responsiveness	20
Anxiety	30
Hostility	34
Rigidity	43
Dominance	14

These figures present strong evidence against the cross-cultural equivalence of the SAPQ at the item level. Overall, only 72 of the original 150 items met all the criteria for acceptance specified by Taylor and Boeyens. The probable explanations put forward by Taylor and Boeyens for this lack of equivalence are of considerable importance, this being one of the few applied attempts at

providing insight into the reasons for the differences in response between blacks and whites. Taylor and Boeyens discuss five types of item incomparability: Differences in Mores; Situational and Experiential Factors; Cultural Differences in Word Meanings; Cultural Beliefs; and Social Desirability.

The category *Differences in Mores* refers to an adherence to different cultural practices which may produce differences in responses. For example, item 30 presents respondents with a choice between stopping and chatting when seeing someone they know in the street, or just saying hello and walking on. Blacks endorsed the former option to a greater extent than would be predicted from their responses to the other items of this scale. In the black culture this situation demands a certain response and thus has little discriminative ability.

The category *Situational and Experiential Factors* refers to the differential exposure to situations across cultures. Items involving the response to a telephone ringing in the middle of the night or one's reaction to car trouble shortly after a check-up were thought to be incomparable because of the differing frequencies of ownership of these commodities. Less obvious are items such as item 68, part of the Hostility scale, which offers a choice between tough and humanitarian heroes. The higher endorsement of the humanitarian option by black subjects is conceivably a result of their experience of oppression, which may engender a propensity to identify with more caring figures.

Incomparability stemming from *Cultural Differences in Word Meanings* refers to subtle differences in the subjects' understanding of a word or phrase, such as that found in response to item 14 relating to having meals "at the same time" every

day. The white respondents took this as referring to the time of day, whereas the black subjects interpreted the same phrase as meaning "all together".

Cultural Beliefs about the world may differ in ways which the test constructor - in assuming the universality of a personal system of beliefs - did not envisage. For example, item 52 asks about the frequency of vivid dreams, which is intended as an indicator of anxiety. The tendency of blacks to indicate that they did in fact have vivid dreams may be attributed to the cultural belief in dreams as spiritual communications.

The *Social Desirability* of certain personality characteristics may differ from culture to culture. Taylor and Boeyens found that blacks evince less anxiety to items relating to their level of composure before an interview (item 107) and an examination (item 110) - situations presumably stressful to members of all cultures - than would be expected from their responses to other items of the Anxiety scale. In the absence of any other reasonable explanation they attributed this to an unwillingness on the part of the subjects to admit to nervousness in these situations.

In summary, while the constructs of the SAPQ seem fairly suitable for cross-cultural use, with the Social Responsiveness and Dominance scales faring best, at the item level this test is unsuitable for use with black subjects. This led Taylor and Boeyens to reach the conclusion that although the SAPQ as it stands is not well suited for use with blacks, the method of assessment - trait-based personality questionnaires - can be made suitable for all literate South Africans. This will hold true only if considerable care is put into their construction in

terms of construct and item appropriateness. This claim will be evaluated in a later section.

c) Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire

The Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 PF) purports to measure the 16 primary and several second-order dimensions of personality found by Cattell through the use of factor analysis. Cattell, Eber and Tatsuoka (1970) report that numerous studies have found Cattell's factors to be cross-culturally replicable in an impressive number of countries and suggest that although these factors are universal, differences in source-trait levels do exist. A number of studies call this into question, and H.J. Eysenck and M.W. Eysenck (1985), after reviewing the research, conclude that although Cattell's second-order factors have some degree of universality, support for universality of the primary factors could not be found. Conrad, Mohr and Seydel (1982) administered the German version of the 16 PF to 1 024 subjects and reported that Cattell's factors could not be confirmed, having found instead a 7-factor solution. Abdel-Khalek, Ibrahim and Budek (1986) administered the A form of the 16 PF to 316 Egyptian undergraduates and found support for only two second-order factors. Adcock and Adcock (1977) found that whereas the general factor structure was supported in their sample of 1 060 New Zealand males, the discrepancies were too large to enable them to recommend the use of the 16 PF with similar samples.

Cattell (1973) attributes deviations from his factorial structure to inadequate design, poor methodology and inadequate sampling procedures. Golden (1978) administered the 16 PF to 100 American students of European ancestry and 117

Americans of Japanese ancestry and, using procedures identical to those of Cattell, replicated Cattell's second-order structure only for the European group. Both samples represented the same education and social group and were sampled from the same university, thereby eliminating flaws with regard to both sample inequivalence and methodology. At the item level, Schneewind (1978) found that only 192 of an original number of 564 items were appropriate for his German sample of 3 280. Conrad, Mohr and Seydel (1982) subjected data from 1 024 German subjects to Rasch scaling and found that only 82 of the original 128 items could be retained as homogeneous items.

Surprisingly, there has been little cross-cultural South African research conducted on the 16 PF, although it has been translated into Afrikaans and standardized for white South Africans (Maas, 1975; Madge & Du Toit, 1966, 1975). Booysen (1988) administered the 16 PF to 99 coloured bus drivers. Internal reliability coefficients for the four scales used in predicting accident-risk driving behaviour were 0,4, 0,5, 0,64 and 0,74, and test-retest coefficients were even lower, dropping as low as 0,19. Clearly this test was grossly unsuitable for this sample, and this study has implications for the uncritical use of the 16 PF with samples comprising subjects other than whites.

Although none of these studies alone, owing to the wide range of possible alternative explanations, present convincing evidence against the cross-cultural utility of the 16 PF, taken as a whole they suggest that extreme caution should be taken in this regard. The cross-cultural use of the 16 PF, without extensive care being given to the refactoring of scales, item analysis and validation, cannot be recommended at this time.

5.4 THE FUTURE OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Are the problems associated with personality assessment in South Africa such that they preclude its usefulness? Consider for a moment the prospects of selection without the use of personality assessment instruments. We could rely on the interview, which is highly subjective, may be more open to stereotypical judgements, may have even less reliability and validity cross-culturally (Ickes, 1984; Sundberg & Gonzales, 1981) and which does nothing to eliminate what Dickens and Dickens (1982) refer to as "neoracism" - racism so subtle that it is difficult to identify. Structured tests at least allow the application of psychometric procedures such as bias studies in order to assess the extent of their cross-cultural suitability (Jackson *et al.*, 1983). Creative solutions as well as psychometric remedies need to be found at each level of analysis.

The relevance of constructs can be ascertained through group discussions with members of other cultures and through techniques such as Kelly's Repertory Grid (Taylor & Boeyens, 1990). But it is at the item level that the test constructor's ingenuity is likely to be challenged if trait-based, objective tests are to become a workable cross-cultural reality as T.R. Taylor and Boeyens (1990) suggest they might. Some suggestions have been made in this regard by Jackson and his associates (1983), who believe that by using modern methods of test construction, by avoiding cultural localisms and by phrasing items in very general terms to refer to explicit constructs, the conditions for equivalence can be met.

Taylor and Boeyens (1990) note that well-chosen broad items produce higher item-total correlations than do more specific ones. In deciding on the

hierarchical level at which to tap a construct, a trade-off is made between the possibility of including items that are culturally inappropriate when they are specific, and too transparent when they are broader. Broadly conceived items allow the subject to engage in what Epstein (1983) has called "intuitive" aggregation, in that the subject is free to include and exclude items at will to form a judgement. This opens the door, however, to "creative" aggregation in which the subject can, even without intentional fabrication, arrive at the "right" answer. Where subjects are motivated to present themselves in a favourable light - as in selection procedures - this problem is exacerbated and answers are as likely to reflect the applicant's perception of the job requirements as any personality factors.

Mischel (1972) somewhat idealistically takes this one step further with his suggestion that, given enough information about a job, an applicant himself is in the best position to consider all the relevant factors which emerge from his life experiences in order to decide if his "personality" is suited to the job. This kind of employment counselling, Mischel concedes, is only truly effective when there are alternatives to be weighed up against one another, as an applicant may otherwise find reason to be convinced that he is suitable for the job - particularly if it is an illustrious or lucrative one.

Dealing with the item bias arising from specificity is no simple matter. We could ensure situational comparability, Shweder (1979) notes, by making our definition of a behavioural situation as devoid of meaning as possible. A pool of items could be generated that are quite free from bias or cultural specificity, but these items would be so unrepresentative and unlifelike as to call the content validity of scales into question. Taylor and Boeyens (1990) suggested that black subjects

did not wish to admit to nervousness before an important event. Are we then to omit such items, which may conceivably represent important indicators of anxiety in the white culture, in order to avoid bias? And, even if we successfully eliminate bias between two - or even four - samples, will this equivalence be generalizable? Recall that Taylor and Boeyens found similar factor structures in three of their samples, the fourth differing fairly substantially. Taylor and Boeyens could offer no explanation for this deviation and it is clear that subtle differences in samples, be they of a cultural, subgroup or unspecified nature, exert an influence which may affect results in unpredictable ways. Thus, while it may be possible to "force" data to be free of bias in the construction of a test, this does not guarantee generalizability.

A more flexible approach to the assessment of personality should be implemented. The importance of what Donald *et al.* (1990; see also Brislin, 1980; Strümpfer, 1980; Triandis, 1980) refer to as a multi-trait/multi-method/multi-rater approach needs to be fully recognized. Although we should not expect this to reveal a simple structure or objective truth (Munro, 1983), the deficits of various tests or methods can be minimized. The use of observational methods in which the assessment situation is more closely related to performance criteria may be a useful supplement to more traditional methods, and it is worth noting that exercises typical of an assessment centre have been found useful in the assessment of blacks in South Africa (Charoux, 1990). A group discussion between potential managers may reveal levels of dominant behaviour that are relevant to their future interaction with other managers. And, if "friendly" behaviour is given a meaning by the participant which is not shared by the investigator, the possibility that similar misunderstandings may occur in real-life settings should be entertained. Human (1982a), for example, notes the

defensiveness with which some black managers react in response to offers of help from their white colleagues, interpreting this as a comment on their lack of competence. In the absence of a complete understanding of a culture, personality test scores need not have the last word, and an observation such as that made in the example given by Human provides information which may be explored further in an interview.

Anastasi (1988) has expressed the belief that a detailed biography would allow us to predict behaviour more accurately than any test and suggests that the scope of biographical inventories be widened to include not only the passive exposure customarily requested, but more specific job-related past achievements. One way in which personality could be assessed within the context of the individual's life would be to ask the testee to sort a number of statements into piles of "Like me", "Not like me" and "Unsure", with a request for behavioural incidents from this person's life in support. These methods all serve to facilitate the formation of a more holistic view of a person - a result which is undoubtedly relevant to cross-cultural assessment practices.

5.4.1 Fairness in Selection

The problems discussed so far have been primarily related to issues which, according to T.R. Taylor (1987), should be considered as falling under the expertise of the test constructor. However, there is another set of decisions to be made which is the responsibility of the test user and which, given the obstacles to be overcome in creating suitable tests, is likely to gain importance. The responsibility here is in terms of the *use* made of test scores, a practice

which may ultimately prove more important than establishing the culture-fairness of a test (Biesheuvel, 1987b; Brislin, Lonner & Thorndike, 1973; Sundberg & Gonzales, 1981). In employment selection this amounts to a policy of fair selection. Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike (1973) state that there is no such thing as an unfair test - only the unfair use of a test. Hence fairness in testing cannot be achieved on a purely statistical or methodological basis, and social judgements inevitably have to be made (Taylor & Radford, 1986).

In view of the economic and political climate in South Africa today, one of the major aims of selection testing should be to facilitate equal opportunity for all, an aim which should not be compromised through a lack of understanding of another culture. It is time to reject "deficit" theories of race in assessing personality whereby a black man emerges as a "sick white man" (Sikes, in Squire, 1984) and to start realizing that there are alternatives. The answer lies not necessarily in adapting totally to the traditional culture as Munro (1983) suggests. The Figure Classification Test of the NIPR, for instance, assesses conceptual reasoning without using "ethnic" concepts which are unrelated to functioning in Westernized institutions (T.R. Taylor, 1983). We are not however advocating the naive approach mentioned (though not advocated) by Bhana (1987) which holds that we need look no further than the criterion measure for notions of fairness for, if all applicants have to perform in a Westernized setting, then surely it is not unreasonable to expect them to perform on Westernized tests. A realistic approach is called for in which it is realized that there is more than one way in which business can be conducted (Human, 1982b) and more than one personality configuration that can achieve success in a specific domain.

Moral issues aside, as minority groups gain power it will increasingly become imperative that employers be able to defend themselves against claims such as that made by Taylor and Radford (1986) that psychometric testing may in some circumstances constitute an unfair labour practice. Approaches to fair selection have been many and varied, and there is no *one* best way to test fairly. Donald *et al.* (1990) stress the importance of implementing bias evaluation programmes that are tailored specifically for a company. They emphasize that such programmes should be ongoing and should extend beyond the assessment of tests to less formalized procedures such as the interview. The linking of test scores to a job-related criterion is particularly important in this regard, but this is only a small part of a fairness policy.

Moving away from an evaluation of specifics, a number of fairness models have been developed. Models of fairness selection emerged from a recognition in the domain of cognitive assessment that in disadvantaged groups, lower predictor scores frequently correspond to higher criterion scores, making their predictive utility questionable. Peterson and Novick (1976) present a review of some of these models, and although not all of them are transferable to the personality domain, some may have a role to play. Thorndike (1971) proposes that individuals be selected in proportion to the success rate of their population groups on a criterion. Practically speaking, this means selecting the most suitable applicants in a specified ratio. Thus, personality instruments can be used to provide information to contribute toward decision-making, but their potential for having a discriminatory effect is reduced. The threshold utility model (Peterson, 1976) takes into account the benefit to society in promoting equal opportunity as one of the factors in determining the overall utility of a given selection decision.

A policy of affirmative action, well entrenched in countries such as the United States (J.M. Taylor, 1987), is increasingly gaining acceptance in South Africa and is supported by the African National Congress (ANC). Although this is a race-bound practice and is therefore not entirely compatible with their non-racial political outlook, affirmative action is regarded by the ANC as a necessary transitional measure. The implementation of a fairness policy is ultimately a subjective, moral judgement for, as T.R. Taylor (1990) notes, "one man's fair is another man's foul" (p. 6), and thus may be perceived differently by the trade unions and the board of directors of a company. Although fairness models do not eliminate the urgent need for the development of suitable, cross-culturally valid personality instruments, it is hoped that in the absence of such measures they can be used to promote the equality of opportunity for all.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 A PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY

6.1 RATIONALE

The limitations of conventional, trait-based approaches to assessment have been well documented. Attempts to overcome these shortcomings have taken many forms, including moderator-variable approaches, an increased emphasis on the role of aggregation in prediction, focusing on the situation to the exclusion of the subject and the use of implicit personality theory. None of these approaches has made a significant contribution either to personality theory or to the practice of assessing individuals for a particular purpose.

Traditional methods of assessment have been pushed far beyond the limits of their usefulness, and a more flexible approach to personality assessment - which should perhaps be regarded more as an art form than a strict science - needs to be engendered. The need for an assessment strategy which is compiled both to suit the population being assessed and to respond to the purpose of answering assessment questions, is regarded as a priority. It is proposed that such a model should explicitly take into account the context of behaviour, should adequately reflect the interpersonal reality of the testee and should allow some expression of reality as construed by the subject. It should furthermore be cross-culturally viable and should abandon the futile goal of painting a broad picture of a

person, instead applying itself to making predictions informed by some understanding of the individual in relation to his world.

An awareness that the testee is a living being whose behaviour changes in different situations and who lives a life intricately connected to the lives of those with whom he interacts is begining to emerge. Theorists such as Leary, Wiggins and Kiesler have been at the forefront of this movement and their interactive approach, though by no means new, has recently caught the imagination of scholars, clinicians and human resource practitioners alike.

Practical manifestations in terms of instruments based on an interactive approach have not adequately captured the essence of the theory. The Interpersonal Check List (LaForge & Suczec, 1955; Leary, 1957), for example, has developed as a logical extension of interpersonal theory. However, the use of adjectives, though geared toward the description of interactive behaviour, does not provide for the description of a particular interaction in a particuar situation and relies heavily on the subject's ability to meaningfully aggregate vast quantities of information. An extremely thorough taxonomy of social behaviour has been developed by Benjamin (1974, 1979) for use by a trained observer and is particularly suited to use in clinical sessions to enable a therapist to describe the behaviour of a patient and to monitor change over time. This is an unstructured form of assessment requiring the personal, continuous input of the assessor and is thus limited with regard to the scope of application.

Clearly, the development of an instrument that incorporates interactive elements in terms of both context and behaviour, recently recognized as being of importance, should be regarded as a priority. The success of such an instrument

relies on the feasibility of a contextual-behavioural approach to interactionism, and the present study is an attempt to assess the feasibility of Kiesler's theory in these terms. In order to accomplish this an instrument was developed to incoporate the essential principles of interactionism using the constructs organized by Kiesler in his Interpersonal Circle. This instrument will be discussed in this chapter and the content validity study designed to assess the feasibility of the approach taken will be presented in the following chapter.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument is based on Kiesler's interpersonal theory developed in an interactive sense by Terre Blanche (1988). The testee will interact, by means of a computer, with a number of fictitious people in a work environment who differ with regard to status, race, sex and preferred mode of interacting in terms of the styles put forward by Kiesler as generated through the different combinations of Dominance and Friendliness.

The model thus incorporates the three essential levels of analysis identified by Duke and Nowicki (1982), namely the relational, communicational and situational. Moreover the instrument is designed so as to facilitate assessment at the level of the interaction sequence, as well as at the levels of interpersonal pattern and style. Specific interpersonal patterns associated with the testee's work-related behaviour will become apparent from an examination of his or her sequential exchanges with the fictitious people, with analysis at the broader level of the interpersonal style being possible as a summary term.

In interaction with each new person the testee is asked to respond with one of the four options which correspond to behaviours from Kiesler's four quadrants. The responses by the fictitious person thereafter depend on the testee's responses, making this instrument truly interactive. This lifelike simulation affords the testee the power, though limited, to create his own environment and thus to make the test relevant for him as he elicits from the fictitious people behaviour similar to that which he encounters in his daily life. Only the broader environment is imposed on the subject and this, being the work environment, is a situation intrinsically of relevance to a job applicant. The interactions are scored according to the traits based on the axes of Dominance and Friendliness, and whereas these constructs may not be equally relevant to all subjects, evidence does exist to suggest the cross-cultural equivalence of these two particular constructs. Taylor and Boeyens (1990) found that in a comparison of black and white responses to the SAPQ, Dominance and Social Responsiveness fared reasonably well. This may be attributed partially to the highly observable nature of these traits, which makes them particularly conducive to behavioural representation.

No attempt is being made to assess a testee's global personality, and what is intended is the elicitation of the particular set of self-identifications which are prominent in the work situation. The behavioural involvement of the subject should at the same time overcome any propensity toward socially desirable responding. In its explicit acknowledgement of the functioning of the presentational self, interpersonal theory is particularly suited to this purpose. The scoring and interpretation of responses will be possible not only between subjects, but also within subjects, as their reactions to the various fictitious

people, representing combinations of characteristics and interpersonal styles, can be compared.

6.3 THE SIMULATED WORK ENVIRONMENT

In accordance with the theoretical position that personality is substantially influenced, determined or created by the situation in which it is evinced, the assessment of personality for the purposes of selection and career planning or development can profitably be restricted to the work domain. A computerized simulation of a work environment was created in which the testee interacts with fictitious people whose characteristics combine both the theoretical considerations of Kiesler's theory through the representation of styles from the four main quadrants of interpersonal behaviour and the variables of status, race and sex required for a realistic portrayal of the work environment and an assessment of behaviour in this domain. The simulation begins with the testee starting a new job at PROTEC Engineering as Project manager. He or she engages in interaction with two characters on this first day, with a further set of interactions, including a board meeting with the other managers, taking place after a hypothetical three weeks. The remaining set of simulated interactions takes place when the person has been with the company for two months.

6.4 THE CHARACTERS

There are 12 characters with whom the testee interacts. These characters give expression to Kiesler's interpersonal styles (the poles having been excluded).

The characters are further divided among three status levels, these being superiors, colleagues and subordinates. Different races (black; white) and sexes are represented equally across interpersonal style and status in order to make comparisons of the responses to these groups of characters possible. The characters include the testee's hypothetical immediate boss and her superior, his or her secretary, four colleagues, a representative of top management and four subordinates. The characters are made more real to the testee through the presentation of line drawings of the faces of each one.

6.5 ITEM ARRANGEMENT AND FUNCTIONING

The items take the form of interaction sequences occurring between the testee and the fictitious people. There are four response options for each item, one from each quadrant of the circle. The response options can also be described in terms of their complementarity. Figure 6.1 shows the complementary, anticomplementary and acomplementary relationships between quadrants. Acomplementary responses can be either semimorphic - complementary only on the Control dimension - or isomorphic - complementary only on the Afilliation dimension, which in effect means that the response is from the same quadrant as the original behaviour. In the example of an item presented in Figure 6.2, the initial statement by Paul (a colleague) is from the Friendly-Dominant quadrant of the circle. Response 1 is from this same quadrant and is thus isomorphic; Response 2 is from the Hostile-Dominant quadrant (Cold) and is an anticomplementary response; Response 3 is from the Hostile-Submissive quadrant (Detached) and is the semimorphic response; and Response 4 is from

the Friendly-Submissive quadrant (Warm) and is the complementary response.

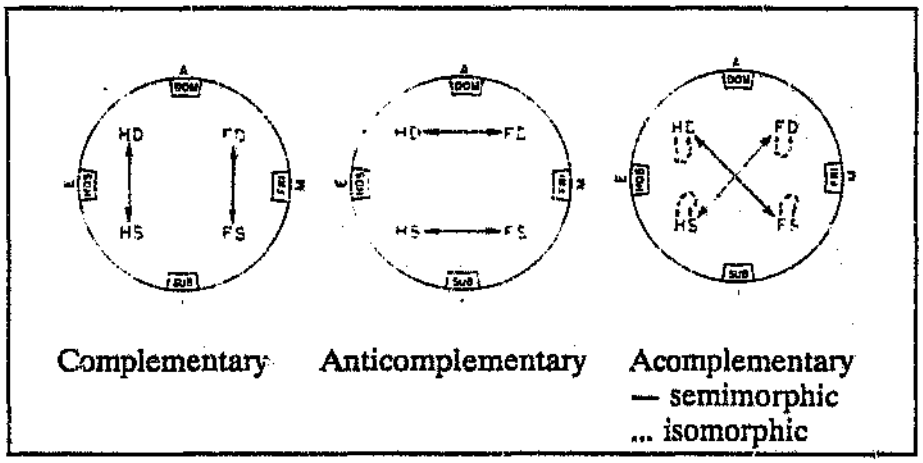


Figure 6.1: Complementary, anticomplementary and acomplementary quadrants of the 1982 Interpersonal Circle (adapted from Kiesler, 1983)

Paul then starts enthusiastically detailing an approach which has worked well in the past with similar projects.

You:

1) say, "Hey, this is great! I've actually used methods quite similar in the past." You then go on to describe a variation which you would like to incorporate in the design.

2) say, "I have no intention of committing myself to any particular approach right now."

3) just say, "Mm."

4) say, "That sounds like a good way of doing it."

Figure 6.2: A test item

An attempt was made to avoid the use of adverbs in the response items as this would allow the testee to reach a decision based on aggregation centering on the adverb. This would undermine the behavioural element of the item. Adverbs

were, however, used freely in the statements made by the fictitious characters in order to facilitate the correct placing of the item on the circle.

Each testee has a preferred interpersonal style with which he or she begins the encounter, or a particular run of items. The testee's response to the first item does not affect the second item, which is the same for all in order to establish the character's initial position in the negotiation over the amount of control each will have in the interaction as well as the level of friendliness of the interaction. From item 3 onwards the computer responds, according to the testee's responses to the previous two items, with the appropriate response determined by an algorithm which takes into account both the principles of complementarity and the fictitious person's original style to provide a lifelike simulation of behaviour.

Ideally, the branching process should operate without restriction. However, the number of items required becomes prohibitive, with 65 536 potential items being necessary by item 5. It is thus necessary to limit the number of items by collapsing then into only four potential items at each level, representing the four interpersonal styles. The four responses will be written to be appropriate responses for each of the four potential items in order to facilitate the transition to the next item. A testee's path up to item 3 is presented in Figure 6.3. In short, there are four potential items at each level, each of which has the same four response options which in turn lead to four potential items at the next level, only one of which is realized each time.

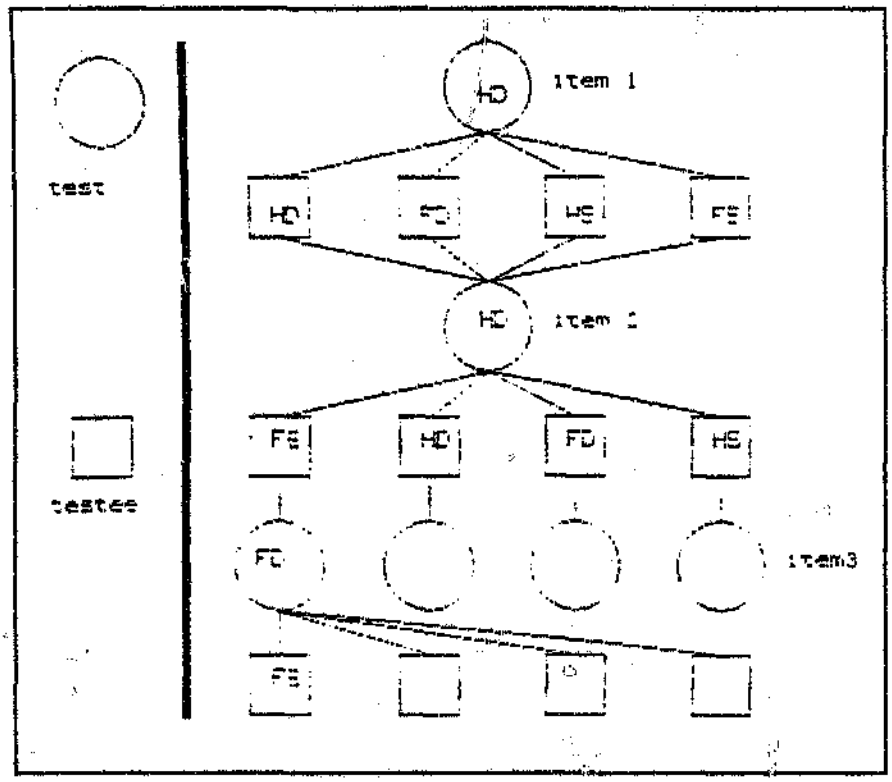


Figure 6.3: A hypothetical interaction sequence (from Terre Blanche, 1988, p. 84)

CHAPTER 7

7.0 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

7.1 AIM OF THE STUDIES

The aim of the studies was to assess the viability of a contextual-behavioural representation of Kiesler's interpersonal theory of personality within the South African context. This was done by assessing the content validity of the items through expert ratings. A preliminary study was undertaken to ensure that the story line was plausible, followed by two content validity studies, the second being restricted to items that appeared in need of revision in the first study.

7.1.1 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

It was hypothesized that a set of items created as a contextual-behavioural representation of Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle will fit the theoretical model. For this hypothesis to be supported it was required that a minimum of two-thirds of the items be agreed on by two-thirds of the subjects, with the remaining third of the items being agreed on by half of the subjects.

Hypothesis 2

It was hypothesized that there will be no significant differences between blacks and whites in the scores indicating level of agreement with the investigator.

7.2 PRELIMINARY STUDY

A preliminary study was conducted with a sample of 12 subjects comprising both psychologically sophisticated subjects and members of the general population. The aim of this study was to make sure that each response was regarded by the subjects as being appropriate, to ensure that the story line was plausible and to eliminate any inconsistencies and ambiguous responses. Subjects were tested using a paper-and-pencil version of the test and were asked to comment on the items in the course of this testing. To establish if the subjects perceived the behaviour of the fictitious characters in the way intended by the investigator, after each series of interactions subjects were asked to complete a scale rating the behaviour of the character over the course of the interaction. The interactive nature of the test resulted in different interpersonal patterns in the behaviour of the fictitious characters and these were then compared with the subjects' ratings.

The test was revised three times, each revision taking place after four subjects had been tested. In the testing of the final four subjects the agreement between the subjects' ratings and the intended personality characteristics of the characters

was high and all the problems relating to inconsistency, implausibility and ambiguity had been eliminated.

7.3 DESIGN OF THE FIRST CONTENT VALIDITY STUDY

7.3.1 Sample

The sample was made up of 24 expert raters. Of the 24, 8 were registered psychologists, 5 had a Masters degree in Psychology but were not registered, 1 was a psychiatrist and the remaining 10 all had their Honours in Psychology and worked in a field which suggested their psychometric sophistication. One-third (n = 8) of the subjects were black and two-thirds (n = 16) were white. Although an equal number of black and white raters would have been preferable, the scarcity of black psychologists was prohibitive. One-third (n = 8) of the sample was male, two-thirds being female.

7.3.2 Instrumentation

The 672 items and responses were broken down into four different sets to include all the possible branches of the behaviour of the fictitious people and the four responses options available to the testee. Thus, each subject was required to rate a total of 168 responses. Each response was rated a total of six times. The subjects were requested to select from four groups of adjectives, which correspond to the four quadrants of Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle, the group from which each statement was drawn. The adjectives in each quadrant appear in Table 7.1. Group A represents the Friendly-Dominant quadrant, Group B the

Friendly-Submissive quadrant, Group C the Hostile-Dominant quadrant and Group D the Hostile-Submissive quadrant. The instructions to the subjects can be found in Appendix A and an example of the format of the items is presented in Appendix B. The 16 segments are not dissimilar enough to reasonably allow the statements to be validated for each segment. However, as the scoring of the test will concentrate on the quadrants and their relation to one another, this is not thought to be a serious limitation.

Table 7.1: The adjectives in the four groups

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
Confident Self-assured Self-reliant Cheerful	Warm Gentle Kind Understanding Sympathetic	Cold Stern Strict Punitive	Aloof Uninterested Distant Preoccupied Bored
Spontaneous Talkative Enthusiastic Jovial	Trusting Innocent Generous Forgiving	Mistrusting Suspicious Resentful Cunning	Taciturn Controlled Silent Undemonstrative Inhibited
Sociable Outgoing Friendly Lighthearted	Deferent Respectful Content Approving	Critical Competitive Ruthless	Self-doubting Unassured Awkward Apologetic Glum

7.3.3 Analysis

In testing the first hypothesis, a Chi-square analysis could conceivably have been applied to the data. However, in light of the large number of comparisons needed (840), and in accordance with Campbell's (1971) position that a test of significance does not necessarily identify meaningful results and that comparing

factors with chance is not always appropriate, this option was rejected. Instead, the level of acceptability was decided on a rational-intuitive basis by the investigator. Specifically, the fit of the subjects' ratings to the theoretical model was to be be found adequate if two-thirds of the items were correctly categorized by two-thirds of the subjects (Criterion 1), with the remaining third of the items being agreed on by half of the subjects (Criterion 2). The analysis was performed using a computer program written by the investigator.

The second hypothesis was tested with a t-test using the NIPR Testing Statistics Package (Version 2.0) developed by Boeyens (Boeyens & Taylor, 1991).

7.4 DESIGN OF THE SECOND CONTENT VALIDITY STUDY

7.4.1 Sample

The sample consisted of six subjects, two with a Masters in Psychology, the remainder having an Honours in Psychology. Again, one-third of the sample was black and two-thirds were white. One of the subjects was male, the other five being female.

7.4.2 Instrumentation

The items that did not meet the criteria set for item acceptability in the first study were revised and resubmitted to the subjects for rating. Because so few items were in need of revision, the six subjects were asked to rate the items in

all four of the groups of items necessary to cover all the interactive branches of the test.

7.4.3 Analysis

The same criteria set for the first study were applied, namely that the fit of the subjects' ratings to the theoretical model was to be be found adequate if two-thirds of the items were correctly categorized by two-thirds of the subjects (Criterion 1), with the remaining third of the items being agreed on by half of the subjects (Criterion 2). The computer program used in the first study was modified to deal with the unequal sizes of the four groups and used to analyse the data.

The second hypothesis was not tested in the second study because of the small sample size (N = 6).

CHAPTER 8

8.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 THE FIRST CONTENT VALIDITY STUDY

8.1.1 Overview of Ratings

In Table 8.1 through to Table 8.8, Quadrants A, B, C and D refer to the quadrant of Kiesler's interpersonal circle represented by the items and Groups a, b, c and d refer to the sets the items were split into in order to cover all items in all possible branches of the test. Criterion 1 was met if the items were correctly categorized by two-thirds of the subjects. Criterion 2 applied to the remaining items and was met if half of the subjects agreed on the categorization.

Overall, the results of the first study were better than was expected. As can be seen in Table 8.1, 71.3% of the items were agreed on by two-thirds of the sample (Criterion 1), with 12.1% being agreed on by half the subjects (Criterion 2). Only 16.7% of the items had to be revised.

Table 8.1: Summary of the acceptability of items across groups

Group	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a (N=168)	123	73.2	10	6.0	35	20.8	168	100.0
b (N=168)	124	73.8	20	11.9	24	14.3	168	100.0
c (N=168)	117	69.6	24	14.3	27	16.1	168	100.0
d (N=168)	115	68.4	27	16.1	26	15.5	168	100.0
Total	479	71.3	81	12.1	112	16.7	672	100.0

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

The results from the first study give a particularly good indication of the problems involved in creating a contextual-behavioural personality instrument. Although these problems were overcome in the second study, the results of the first study will be discussed in more detail in order to facilitate some understanding of the mechanisms at work in the test.

8.1.2 Analysis by Quadrant

a) Quadrant A

It can be seen from Table 8.2 that for Quadrant A, although Criterion 1 was met when considering all groups together, with 66.7% of the items being agreed on by two-thirds of the subjects, Group d in particular was in need of revision with regard to Criterion 1. Overall, the percentage of items in need of revision when both criteria were considered ranged from 9.8% for Group c to 25.0% for Group b. The total number of items finally revised from Quadrant A was 27 (16.1%).

Table 8.2: Item acceptability for Quadrant A across groups

Group	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a (N=45)	31	68.9	6	13.3	8	17.8	45	100.0
b (N=40)	27	67.5	3	7.5	10	25.0	40	100.0
c (N=41)	30	73.2	7	17.1	4	9.8	41	100.0
d (N=42)	24	57.1	13	31.0	5	11.9	42	100.0
Total	112	66.7	29	17.3	27	16.1	168	100.0

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

Figure 8.1 shows some of the successful items in Quadrant A. Success was achieved in this Quadrant, the Friendly-Dominant quadrant, by putting across an action or an intention to carry out an action, for example making arrangements, as well as by a display of enthusiasm for a course of action. The disposition of the interactant, for example, sociable, was also put across.

Character
Penny says, "I'll make the necessary arrangements." She departs, saying enthusiastically, "I'd quite like to meet with Dave, as well, while I'm down there. He always has an interesting perspective on things."

Mr Twala says so[illegible]bly. "I'm looking forward to seeing how things work out for you here."

Testee
You say, "That would be great!"

You say, "I'll start looking for someone right away. In fact, I'll speak to Karen about it - she handles recruitment for our division."

Figure 8.1: Examples of successful items from Quadrant A

b) *Quadrant B*

The item acceptability for the items in Quadrant B is shown in Table 8.3. It was expected that the behavioural representation of the items in Quadrant B would present some difficulty as they are from the less active, submissive half of the circle. However, as is clear from Table 8.3, this was not so. Overall, 68.5% of the items met Criterion 1 and 12.5% met Criterion 2, with only 19.0% of the items being in need of revision. The percentage of items in need of revision ranged from 11.4% for Group b to 25.6% for Group a.

Table 8.3: Item acceptability for Quadrant B across groups

Group	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a (N=43)	30	69.8	2	4.7	11	25.6	43	100.0
b (N=44)	30	68.2	9	20.5	5	11.4	44	100.0
c (N=39)	25	64.1	5	12.8	9	23.1	39	100.0
d (N=42)	30	71.4	5	11.9	7	16.7	42	100.0
Total	115	68.5	21	12.5	32	19.0	168	100.0

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

In Figure 8.2 some examples of successful items from Quadrant B, the Friendly-Submissive quadrant, can be seen. It was found that the temperament of the interactants in this quadrant was more important than what they actually did. However, varying degrees of inaction were obviously required to place the items correctly. Behaviour such as deferring to another's opinion met this dual goal. Responses indicating a show of support and warm, kind behaviour were most clearly regarded as coming from this quadrant.

Character
Angela says supportively, "Well, from what I've seen, you definitely have the experience to handle this project."

Ms Makhoba says kindly, "It won't always be like this, but things are quite hectic at the moment, aren't they?"

Testee
You say, "Mm, I'd value your opinion, if you could make a recommendation."

You say, "You're doing fine. This is a difficult project."

Figure 8.2: Examples of successful items from Quadrant B

c) Quadrant C

From Table 8.4 it can be seen that at least two-thirds of the items in all four groups met Criterion 1, with relatively few items (7.7%) meeting Criterion 2. Overall, more items (19.6%) were rejected from Quadrant C, the Hostile-Dominant quadrant, than from any other quadrant. The explanation for Quadrant C, a quadrant lying in the dominant half of the circle, faring badly probably lies in the attempt to avoid socially undesirable items. That a high percentage of items met Criterion 1 while the percentage meeting Criterion 2 was low can be similarly explained because in the attempt to avoid socially undesirable items, items lacking the sufficient amount of hostility were unanimously perceived as coming from Quadrant A.

Table 8.4: Item acceptability for Quadrant C across groups

Group	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a (N=39)	27	69.2	2	5.1	10	25.6	39	100.0
b (N=39)	30	76.9	2	5.1	7	17.9	39	100.0
c (N=47)	33	70.2	6	12.8	8	17.0	47	100.0
d (N=43)	32	74.4	3	7.0	8	18.6	43	100.0
Total	122	72.6	13	7.7	33	19.6	168	100

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

In Quadrant C it was particularly important to avoid the use of adverbs in the responses available to the testee in order to minimize the effect of social desirability. With this category being in the dominant half of the circle, responses requiring that the interactant take the initiative and either criticize or behave in a mistrustful or cold way were judged correctly most of the time. Some examples can be seen in Figure 8.3.

Character
Paul says, "I don't see why we should have to work such long hours, anyway. We certainly don't get paid enough for management to expect it."

At this point Jackie's phone rings. She says coldly, I'd better stop wasting time and get back to work."

Testee
You say, "I've told you before that I want to authorize plans personally. Anything could go wrong."

You say, "It shouldn't be difficult finding someone if the people in Human Resources do their job properly for a change."

Figure 8.3: Examples of successful items from Quadrant C

d) Quadrant D

As with Quadrant B, it was expected that Quadrant D, being from the submissive half of the circle, would be difficult to portray in behavioural terms. However, as can be seen in Table 8.5, Quadrant D fared particularly well, with the percentage of items meeting Criterion 1 ranging from 70.7% to 85.4%. Overall, 11.9% of the items in this quadrant were in need of revision, the lowest percentage of all the groups.

Table 8.5: Item acceptability for Quadrant D across groups

Group	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a (N=41)	35	85.4	0	0.0	6	14.6	41	100.0
b (N=45)	37	82.2	6	13.3	2	4.4	45	100.0
c (N=41)	29	70.7	6	14.6	6	14.6	41	100.0
d (N=41)	29	70.7	6	14.6	6	14.6	41	100.0
Total	130	77.4	18	10.7	20	11.9	168	100.0

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

It was thought that the aloof and taciturn aspects of Quadrant D, the Hostile-Submissive quadrant, would be particularly difficult to portray behaviourally. However, the use of adverbs such as 'absently', 'distantly' and 'uninterested' in the statements made by the fictitious character were successful. With the responses available to the testee, short, noncommunicative sentences showing a lack of interest were found to be successful. The self-doubting component was easily portrayed by creating a behavioural picture of uncertainty. Some examples of successful items from Quadrant D are presented in Figure 8.4.

Character
Brian says apprehensively, "I hate to ask this of you, but I really need the plans for the ENNEX project sometime soon."

Jackie is absently fiddling with the papers, evidently waiting for you to continue.

Testee
You say, "Mm."

You say, "O.K. I'm sorry I kept you so long."

Figure 8.4: Examples of successful items from Quadrant D

8.1.3 Summary of Ratings

A summary of item acceptability across all four quadrants is shown in Table 8.6. Criterion 1 was met by at least two-thirds of the items in all four quadrants, with an overall percentage of 71.3, thereby satisfying the requirement stated in Hypothesis 1 that two-thirds of the items should be agreed on by two-thirds of the subjects. However, the second part of Hypothesis 1 states that the remaining one-third of the items should be agreed on by half of the subjects. This requirement was not met in the first content validity study, with only a further 12.1% of the items, 112 in total, meeting Criterion 2, meaning that the remaining 16.7% of the items were in need of revision.

Table 8.6: Summary of item acceptability across quadrants

Quadrant	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A (N=168)	112	66.7	29	17.3	27	16.1	168	100.0
B (N=168)	115	68.5	21	12.5	32	19.0	168	100.0
C (N=168)	122	72.6	13	7.7	33	19.6	168	100.0
D (N=168)	130	77.4	18	10.7	20	11.9	168	100.0
Total	479	71.3	81	12.1	112	16.7	672	100.0

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100 because of rounding.

8.1.3 Analysis by Race

Each subject's ratings were scored for agreement with the examiner. A mean score out of 168 was calculated for blacks and whites separately and these were compared using a t-test.

The mean for the black group was 113.1 and for the white group, 119,9. The variances in the two groups did not differ significantly (p = 0,174; two-tailed) and Roscoe's (1975, in Boeyens & Taylor, 1991) formula assuming equal variances was used. The t-statistic was -0,8171 and the significance level was 0,4226. Thus, the means for the two groups did not differ significantly.

8.2 THE SECOND CONTENT VALIDITY STUDY

With the insight into item construction gained from the first content validity study, the 112 items that were rejected in the first study were easily revised to

meet the specified requirements, as can be seen in Table 8.7. In all four quadrants, 100% of the items met Criterion 1.

Table 8.7: Summary of item acceptability across quadrants for revised items

Quadrant	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A (N=27)	27	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	100.0
B (N=32)	32	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	100.0
C (N=33)	33	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	33	100.0
D (N=20)	20	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	100.0
Total	112	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	112	100.0

8.3 THE FIRST AND SECOND STUDIES COMBINED

When the results from the items in the first study were replaced with those revised in the second study, the items in all quadrants were remarkably successful. The percentage of items that met Criterion 1 ranged from 82.7% to 92.3%, with an overall figure of 87.9%. The remaining 12.1% of the items all met Criterion 2. No items were rejected.

Table 8.8: Summary of item acceptability across quadrants for all items

Quadrant	Item acceptability							
	Criterion 1		Criterion 2		Rejected		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A (N=168)	139	82.7	29	17.3	0	0.0	168	100.0
B (N=168)	147	87.5	21	12.5	0	0.0	168	100.0
C (N=168)	155	92.3	13	7.7	0	0.0	168	100.0
D (N=168)	150	89.3	18	10.7	0	0.0	168	100.0
Total	591	87.9	81	12.1	0	0.0	672	100.0

8.4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS BY HYPOTHESES

8.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 required that two-thirds of the items in all four quadrants be agreed on by two-thirds of the subjects and that the remaining third of the items be agreed on by half of the subjects. These requirements were met and Hypothesis 1 was supported.

8.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 was tested only in the first content validity study due to the small sample size (N = 6) in the second study. The original items were less clearcut than those in the second study and this, in effect, means that greater confidence can be placed in the results.

Support for Hypothesis 2 requires that the means for the ratings by the black and white subject groups should not differ significantly. This requirement was met and Hypothesis 2 was supported.

8.5 CONCLUSION

An examination of the results of this investigation reveals that the portrayal of behaviour within the framework of Kiesler's interpersonal circle is feasible. Furthermore, this is true of each of the four quadrants, with the quadrants from

the submissive half of the circle faring no worse than those in the dominant half.

In developing tests to reflect the principles of interactionism, theorists have found it necessary to rely on instruments such as the Interpersonal Adjective Checklist (LaForge & Suczek, 1955; Leary, 1957), which are subject to many of the limitations of conventional tests in that testees are forced to aggregate behaviour in order to decide if a particular adjective is descriptive of them or not. The finding that a contextual-behavioural representation of Kiesler's interpersonal circle is possible represents a definitive move away from traditional trait-based aggregative tests. With only a few exceptions, it was possible to avoid the use of adverbs in the responses to be chosen by the testees. This is important because it prevents the testee from giving more weight to the adverb than to the behaviour itself.

The high level of agreement present in the ratings of the subjects supports the continued use of objective tests. The value inherent in an intensive assessment such as that afforded by Benjamin's (1974, 1979) taxonomy for the structural analysis of social behaviour for use by a trained observer is not being disputed. However, an instrument that can be completed by testees under the assumption that the items hold the same meaning for all testees, with the result that the scores can be compared, is less demanding in terms of the input of the assessor and can make a valuable contribution to the practice of evaluation.

An attempt at developing an objective interactive instrument was made by Terre Blanche (1988). However, the instrument proved to have extremely poor validity. Terre Blanche did not assess the items to ensure that the meaning given them by the testees was the meaning he had intended and this is a

probable reason for the failure of the test to achieve its aim. The present study profited from the study conducted by Terre Blanche in terms of the insight gained, and the level of subtlety of the items in Terre Blanche's study was reduced to make it more likely that the same meaning was given the items by all testees. The high level of agreement attained indicates that this result was achieved and there is no reason to believe that the instrument will not eventually prove to be a highly predictive one.

The present study found that the items were judged with an equal degree of success by the black group and by the white group. This finding is extremely encouraging as one of the major criticisms directed at personality assessment in South Africa is that the items of existing tests are interpreted differently by different cultural groups (Taylor & Boeyens, 1990). The success of the items in the present study can be attributed to the behavioural nature of the items, which require little in the way of interpretation.

CHAPTER 9

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are three main limitations to this study. The first concerns the grouping of the items. Ideally, each of the four responses available to the testee should have been paired with each of the four behaviours of the fictitious characters. In other words, the response from each quadrant should have been paired with the characters' behaviour representing each quadrant. Extending this principle even further, the four possible behaviours of the fictitious character following the testee's response should have followed each of these responses. It could also be argued that the interaction pattern as a whole might have an influence on the ratings of any particular item and that all conceivable combinations shoud be presented for rating.

Clearly, with 672 items, these possibilities could not be incorporated into the study. It is encourging to note that overall only 112 (16.7%) of the items in the first study had to be revised. It is unlikely that the pairs of items submitted to the subjects happened by chance to be the only pairs likely to be rated succeessfully. In other words, it is probable that a response rated as coming from Quadrant A in one pairing would be rated as coming from the same quadrant in a different pairing. It is possible that in the second content validity study, dealing only with the revised items, the rating of the items was influenced

by the preceding statement and that the revision was context-specific. For example, an item from Quadrant C may have been consistently regarded as a Quadrant A item, possibly as a result of the context in which it was placed. However, the aim in revising an item such as this was to make it more obviously from its own quadrant. This should have the result of reducing ambiguity and at the same time eliminating the context-specific element of the item.

The second limitation lies in the fact that the 16 segments of the Interpersonal Circle were reduced to four quadrants for the purposes of rating. However, a number of theorists, including Kiesler (1983), believe that the four quadrants and the relationships between them reveal sufficient information for assessment purposes. The instrument developed in this study incorporates all 16 segments in order to represent in a formal way all of the components of the four quadrants. However, the scoring system relies only on the quadrants, necessitating the validation only of these components.

The third limitation of this study concerns its scope. Because of the failure in terms of predictive validity of the study utilizing Kiesler's Interpersonal Circle conducted by Terre blanche (1988), it was decided first to investigate the feasibility of representing the theory in behavioural terms before continuing with further validation. The present study achieved this aim, but further validation studies addressing construct and predictive validity are clearly needed in order to fully realize the potential of Kiesler's theory in personality assessment.

Once the contextual-behavioural approach to personality assessment becomes more widely accepted, there is considerable scope for future research. Further investigation is required of theoretical postulates such as Kiesler's idea that

behaviour 'pulls' a complementary response, but that this is mediated by each person's preferred interactive style, the situation and factors such as the status of the interactants. As computer technology becomes more advanced, assessing the feasibility of the development of a truly interactive simulation in which the computer actually 'talks' to the testee in an open-ended situation should be regarded as a research priority.

9.2 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

That the field of personality assessment is in a state of crisis is indisputable if viewed from a critical perspective. Yet it is equally clear that there is a need for useful assessments of personality. The recognition of this *need* has resulted in a proliferation of readily accessible trait-based paper-and-pencil measures of personality that are welcomed in all quarters where it is believed that insight can be derived from a colourful array of scores. The shortcomings of this kind of assessment periodically see the light of day, but seldom reach the ears of those outside professional circles, thereby upholding the aura of mysticism which pervades the assessment of personality. It is time that the unfounded belief in personality as an entity that can be accessed psychometrically, be exposed and replaced with an awareness that personality is nothing but a metaphor, something subjectively created to allow people to make sense of the world around them.

No personality instrument will ever be capable of creating an adequate description or of painting a global picture of a person, and any belief to the contrary should be abandoned. The depiction of a person on 3, 5 or even 16

dimensions presents information with as little meaning as an unnumbered child's game of join-the-dots. Responses to the many items which constitute the scales may contain important, relevant information, but in the absence of the unlikely set of circumstances where the investigator and testee share the same world-view, the chance is slight that the information will be collated in such a way that the "correct" picture emerges. The set of nomothetic assumptions that traditionally underlie personality assessment should not go unchallenged. In trait-based assessment practices, personality is routinely measured on traits which may or may not be meaningful to the testee, with items that may or may not have relevance for that person, resulting in interpretations that may or may not bear any relationship to the individual's life. All of these irrelevancies reduce not only the reliability coefficients, but the predictive power as well. The possible benefits to be accrued from supplementing these nomothetic methods with idiographic techniques cannot be overlooked.

The existence of consistency, a prerequisite for making predictions - one of the primary goals of personality assessment - has been much contested. Mischel has tauntingly suggested that the inconsistency observed in assessment is a reflection of the real state of nature and not of the inability of researchers to discover it. Although researchers have not shied away from the challenge of finding consistency, methodological difficulties have proved to be prohibitive, leaving the true nature of things as yet undisclosed. A number of approaches are common: consistency can be forced to emerge experimentally by eliminating any factors that may prevent its appearance; testing procedures can be fine-tuned through the use of improved technology; data can be aggregated in the hope that relevant information will accumulate faster than the various extraneous influences; or equivalence classes can be formed in which some people, on some traits and in

some situations, will behave consistently. Using the situation to form equivalence classes is in some respects an insurance policy should the existence of consistency ever be disproved, for it allows us to make predictions along the lines that behaviour is, as Mischel would have it, consistent across situations only to the extent that the situations are judged to be similar.

In addition to the above problems there is that of culture. Cross-culturally the difficulty inherent in establishing the equivalence of measures is not inconsiderable, and many of the tests currently in use in South Africa are distinctly unsuitable outside the white culture. These difficulties lead to the conclusion that an instrument in which the assessment procedure is more closely related to the criterion measure - thereby minimizing the need for reliance on inference - will be cross-culturally the most suitable. As the structure of the workforce changes, new approaches to psychometric practices will be called for in response. Fairness in selection becomes a priority, and employers will need to be able to defend their assessment practices against accusations of discrimination. Again, keeping assessment relevant to the criterion is crucial in this respect.

One of the criteria put forward by McGuire (1983) for a good personality theory is that it should reflect the interpersonal reality of the subject. Yet, it is the interpersonal part of this reality which is missing from conventional tests. Men and women do not live in a world in which, like uninvited ghosts, they slide quietly and unnoticed past one another as they go about their daily business. A theory which can take into account the interaction between people is clearly at an advantage over more static, snapshot approaches. An interactive approach is also one way of further closing the gap between the assessment process and

the remainder of reality for the subject. The present study has taken the first step toward closing this gap in finding the interpersonal theory of Kiesler to be suitable for representation in contextual-behavioural terms.

It is unlikely that consensus will ever emerge concerning the *one* best way to assess personality. A number of factors, such as the theoretical perspective adopted, the assessment question and the resources available in terms of expertise, time and money, require the development of instruments to fit the purpose. Jones (1982), writing of scientific theories, cryptically states that their usefulness extends only to "predicting the predictable". This applies equally to the field of personality and implies that the answer is to some extent always included in the question. The more the question allows for the input of information pertaining to the uniqueness of the individual, the more likely is the answer to have validity. As mentioned before, Shweder (1979) has astutely pointed to the inverse relationship between the parsimony of a theory and the degree of predictability it affords, leading to the conclusion that personality assessment rests on a foundation of compromise. The most important criterion in the development of a personality instrument is perhaps that of congruence between the question, the answer and the purpose of assessment.

The instrument developed for the purposes of this study overcomes some of the limitations and shortcomings of traditional assessment methods. Cross-culturally the choice of traits is one that seems to transport well and it was found that the items were interpreted in much the same way by both blacks and whites. The behavioural nature of the interactions, related only to the workplace, further ensures equivalence in relying largely on an information base available to all cultures. The assessment procedure itself is no more than a process of gathering

information. The use to which this information is put is left in the hands of the assessor concerned. The instrument developed offers considerable flexibility of interpretation and it is believed that in this regard it is particularly suitable for incorporation in any fair selection policy as well as in facilitating black advancement, an aim that should rightfully be a priority in our country today.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBJECTS

Dear Respondent

The aim of this study is to establish the content validity of a personality test. You are asked to read a series of interactions which take place between a number of fictitious people and a testee. For each statement please refer to the four groups of adjectives on the following page and select the group which contains a word or words which best describe the statement. Please indicate your choice by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate place on the adjacent answer box. You will notice that the four groups of adjectives are further subdivided into groups of three. Most of the statements can best be described by only one of the subgroups, so do not be concerned if the words in the other two subgroups do not seem to fit as well. An example is provided below.

Jenny, one of your colleagues, comes into your office and says, "I'm terribly sorry to bother you, but the power is off in my office. . . ."

A	B	C	X

This statement is "unassured" or "apologetic" and is from the third subgroup in Group D, and Group D is marked even though the words in the other subgroups, such as "aloof" or "taciturn", do not describe the statement.

The statements you are asked to rate are a subset of a large number of items which make up an interactive personality test in which the person the testee is pretending to interact with changes in behaviour according to the testee's responses. The subset you are asked to rate has been randomly selected from the pool of statements a fictitious person might say in the actual test and from the options available to a testee each time. This explains the absence of consistency in the interactions, and for this reason you are asked to rate each statement in isolation from the others, while still taking into account the larger context of the interaction. You would, for example, take into account that you are rating a hypothetical interaction between a boss and an employee, without being perturbed when the boss is gentle and kind in one statement and cold in the next.

Please read through the groups of adjectives very carefully before starting to rate the statements.

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. If you have any queries, please contact me at 339 4451 Ext. 274.

J England

Jane England
Human Development (Jhb)

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
Confident Self-assured Self-reliant Cheerful	Warm Gentle Kind Understanding Sympathetic	Cold Stern Strict Punitive	Aloof Uninterested Distant Preoccupied Bored
Spontaneous Talkative Enthusiastic Jovial	Trusting Innocent Generous Forgiving	Mistrusting Suspicious Resentful Cunning	Taciturn Controlled Silent Undemonstrative Inhibited
Sociable Outgoing Friendly Lighthearted	Deferent Respectful Content Approving	Critical Competitive Ruthless	Self-doubting Unassured Awkward Apologetic Glum

APPENDIX B

FORMAT OF ITEMS

It is your first day of a new job at PROTEC Engineering. As project manager you are to head a division of 14 people. You will also work closely with several other divisions in the planning, costing, implementation and marketing of large industrial systems.

After dealing with the formalities of paperwork with the people in personnel, you enter the office of Lauren Exley, your immediate boss. She greets you with a friendly smile and says enthusiastically, "It's lovely to have you here!", then shakes your hand.

A	B	C	D

You say:

"It's great to be here!"

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley then tells you all about the divisions she runs and asks you if you have any idea of what you would like to achieve or how you would like to approach things.

A	B	C	D

You say:

"I guess so", and briefly make a few points.

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley says distantly, "Mm. . . . What were you saying about motivation?"

A	B	C	D

You:

jump at the opportunity to elaborate.

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley says calmly, "I'm really glad you've had training in things like motivation, because there are a few problems in the division you'll be running. Don't worry though, between us we can put things right."

A	B	C	D

You say:

"I'm sure you have some good ideas on what we should do."

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley then tells you a bit about her management philosophy, concluding, "What it really comes down to is making each one feel that they have something to contribute. I like everyone to be involved in decision-making as this helps to create a feeling of responsibility and competence. And, as you know, a content employee is an effective one."

A	B	C	D

You:

say without much interest, "Mm. . . . It has some value."

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley then says sternly, "There's an informal meeting for all the divisional heads this afternoon at 2 pm sharp which you should attend."

A	B	C	D

You:

say noncommittally, "Mm. I'll have to see."

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

Ms Exley then shows you to your office, briefly introduces you to your secretary on the way past and leaves you with some files to go through, saying warmly, "Please don't hesitate to call me if there's anything at all that you need."

A	B	C	D

You say:

"Thank you, that's kind of you."

A	B	C	D

. . . . . .

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