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Exploring industrial psychologists' perceptions of personality assessment in personnel selection and the issues associated with personality assessment in South Africa.

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Abstract

This study explored industrial psychologists' perceptions of personality assessment in personnel selection and the issues associated with personality assessment in South African organisations. This was a qualitative study in which 11 industrial psychologists (2 male, 9 female) were interviewed to determine the reasons why personality assessment is or is not used for selection purposes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted which comprised of 11 questions related to the industrial psychologists context, understanding the place of personality assessment in personnel selection in organisational settings in South Africa and a view of common practice employed in organisational settings in South Africa. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. The analysis resulted in five themes namely, person-environment fit; other purposes for which personality assessment are used; personality tests commonly employed; limitations of personality assessment; and ethical considerations with the use of personality assessment. Based on these themes it can be concluded that there is invaluable information gained from determining whether or not a person will fit into the organisation. Therefore, person-environment fit theory is a crucial theory that underpins the use of personality assessment in personnel selection. Further research is required in the field of psychometric assessments in organisational settings within the South African context in terms of addressing the various ethical issues the administrators are currently facing.