

**The Perceptions of Human Resource Managers on the Use of Psychometric Instruments
in the Public Sector**

by

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submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Commerce (Full Dissertation)

in the subject

INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DATE: September 2025

Declaration

I, Kedibone Daphney Mashiane, student number: 47285389, hereby declare that **“The Perceptions of Human Resource Managers on the Use of Psychometric Instruments in the Public Sector”** is my original work, and that all the references cited have been acknowledged.

I declare that the ethical clearance to conduct the research was acquired from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa. Permission was obtained from the participants who participated in this research. Furthermore, I declare that the study has been carried out in conformity with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (UNISA). Caution was exercised to ensure the research was conducted with the highest integrity, considering Unisa’s Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism.

In addition, I declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or parts thereof, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



September 2025

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Acknowledgements

This research is dedicated to my late father, Mr SJ Mashiane, and my mother, Mrs MP Mashiane, who instilled in me the values of education, hard work and dedication to succeed in life. A big thank you to my daughters, Tumisang Mashiane and Lerato Mashiane, and my only brother, David Mashiane, for their unwavering support throughout my research journey.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Sonja Grobler, for her profound guidance, valuable feedback and motivation throughout my research project. Additionally, I would like to thank the Department of Public Service and Administration for allowing me access to conduct research in the public sector. My sincere gratitude goes to the respective government departments that allowed me to conduct research within their organisation. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to all my research participants; it was through your valuable contributions that my research was a success.

Above all else, a magnificent thank you to my God, who gave me strength and wisdom through my research journey, and His favour upon me to provide my needs during the research process.

Abstract**The Perceptions of Human Resource Managers on the Use of Psychometric Instruments
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DEPARTMENT: Industrial and Organisational Psychology

DEGREE: M Com (Industrial and Organisational Psychology)

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of human resource managers in the public sector on the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process, their concerns and challenges in this regard. Psychometric instruments are regarded as effective tools for rational decision-making concerning the recruitment and selection process; therefore, their non-use, especially in the public sector, is a worrying factor since the public sector forms the majority part of service delivery to its citizens and the economy. A qualitative research design was applied, and data were collected through one-on-one interviews. Data was collected from eight (8) participants acquired through the purposeful, non-probability sampling method. The data was analysed through qualitative content analysis using ATLAS.TI software. The findings of the study indicate that human resource managers in the public sector are aware of the value and effectiveness of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process. However, despite its usefulness, fair administration and application of psychometric instruments are still debatable in the public sector. Psychometric instruments are still perceived as biased and discriminatory, due to their historical introduction, administration and use of psychometric

instruments to disadvantage the minority population of the country. Other concerns highlighted on the application of psychometric instruments are the ethical application of the instrument, cultural diversity, disparity in literacy and education levels, and non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process by lower-level position employees. These negative perceptions about psychometric testing could be further ascribed to the view that the process is too costly for the public sector. The lack of in-house monitoring of the psychometric testing process in the public sector resulted in the disregard of psychometric instruments as valuable to assist in making rightful employee appointment decisions. Therefore, a psychological assessment department within the public sector needs to be established to handle and monitor all psychological assessments in the employee appointment process. The study contributes to the existing knowledge on perceptions about the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process, it raises awareness in the public sector on how to better manage the psychometric testing process, and it elicits interest from professionals who may want to explore issues relating to the study.

Keywords: psychometric instrument, employee appointment process, public sector, South Africa, recruitment and selection, human resource managers

Ngobufitjhazana

**ImiQondo yabaPhathi beHlelo labaSebenzi malungana nokuSetjenziswa kwamaThulusi
weSayikhomethriki eMkhakheni woMbuso**

***(The Perceptions of Human Resource Managers on the Use of Psychometric Instruments
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Ngobufitjhazana

Umnqopho wesifundo lesi bekukuzwisisa imibono yabaphathi behlelo lezabasebenzi emkhakheni womphakathi ngokusetjenziswa kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki ehlelweni lokuqatjiswa kwabasebenzi, ukutshwenyeka kwabo neentjhihilo malungana nalokhu. Amathulusi wesayikhomethriki ngokunabileko athathwa njengamathulusi asebenza kuhle malungana nokuthathwa kweenqunto ezifaneleko ekuqatjhwani kanye nekukhethweni kwabasebenzi; yeke, ukungasetjenziswa kwawo ngokwaneleko emkhakheni wombuso kumnako omkhulu njengombana umkhakha wombuso umnikeli wezenzelwa ezakhamuzini kanye nemnothweni. Idizayini yerhubhululo ngokwekhwalthi yamukelwa kilesisifundo serhubhululo. Idatha yabuthelwa kubahlanganyeli abasibhozo (8) abatholwe ngendlela yokuthatha amasampula enomnqopho, engekho emthethweni. Ukutsengwa kwelwazi elimunyethweko ngokwekhwalthi kwenziwa ngokusebenzisa i-*software* ye--ATLAS.TI. Ilwazi elitholakeleko liveza bona abaphathi behlelo lezabasebenzi emkhakheni wombuso babutjhejile ububhadekelo kanye nokusebenza

kuhle kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki ehlelweni lezokuqatjiswa kwabasebenzi. Nanyana-kunjalo, ukulawulwa kanye nokusetjenziswa kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki kuzakuhlala kuyipikiswano emkhakheni wombuso. Amathulusi wesayikhomethriki kanengi azwisiswa njengamahlelo athatha ihlangothi begodu akhethululako ngenca yomlando wawo wokwethulwa begodu nokungasetjenziswa kwawo ngendlela efaneleko esikhathini esidlulileko lokha nakudlelezelwa inani labantu ebegade baninwa ngaphambilini elizweni. Iminako engezelelako ifaka phakathi ukusetjenziswa ngokulandela imigomo, kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki, ukwehlukahluka kwamasikopilo, imiraro yezefundo kanye namazinga wezefundo, kanye nokungabi nelwazi lamahlelo wezokuhlolwa komkhumbulo hlangana nabasebenzi bezinga eliphasi. Ukutjheja khulu iindleko nakho kugalela imiqondo emimbi malungana nokuhlolwa komkhumbulo, njengombana nje ihlelveli selibonwa njengehlelo elidure khulu emkhakheni wombuso. Irhubhululo liragela phambili nokuveza ukobana ngenca yokuthogakala kwetjhejo lemigomo yeziko kezokuhlolwa komqondo emkhakheni wombuso, amathulusi wezokuhlolwa komkhumbulo akathathwa njengamathulusi aqakathekileko ukwenzela ukuthathwa kweenqunto ezizwakalako malungana nokuqatjiswa kwabasebenzi. Yeke-ke, umnyango wezokuhlolwa komkhumbulo kufanele usungulwe emkhakheni wombuso ukwenzela ukungamela kanye nokutjhejisisa woke amahlelo wezokuhlolwa komkhumbulo ehlelweni lezokuqatjiswa kwesisebenzi. Irhubhululo lifaka isandla elwazini elikhona malungana nokusetjenziswa kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki ehlelweni lokuqatjiswa kwabasebenzi, likhuphula ukutjheja emkhakheni womphakathi ngokuthi lingaphathwa njani ngcono ikambiso yokuhlolwa kwesayikhomethriki, begodu livusa ikareko kibososayensi abangafuna ukuhlola iindaba ezihlobene nesifundo.

Amagama aqakathekileko: kwamathulusi wesayikhomethriki, ihlelo lezokuqatjiswa kwesisebenzi, umkhakha wombuso, ISewula Afrika, ukuqatjiswa nokukhethwa, abaphathi bemisebenzi yabantu

Kakaretšo

Dikgopolo tša Balaodi ba tša Lefapha la Merero ya Bašomi mabapi le Tšhomišo ya Didirišwa tša Monagano Lekaleng la Setšhaba

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Kakaretšo

Maikemišetšo a nyakišišo ye e be e le go kwešiša dikgopolo tša balaodi ba methopo ya bašomi ka lefapheng la mmušo ka ga tšhomišo ya didirišwa tša monagano mo tshepedišong ya go thwala bašomi, matshwenyego a bona le ditlhohlo mabapi le se. Didirišwa tša monagano di tšewa ka bophara bjalo ka didirišwa tše di šomago gabotse tša go tšea diphetho ka tlhaologanyo go thwaleng le go kgetheng bašomi; ka fao, go se šomišwe gabotse ka lekaleng la setšhaba ke taba yeo e tshwenyago ka ge lekala la setšhab e le moabi o bohlokwa wa ditirelo go badudi le ekonomi. Moakanyetšo wa nyakišišo wa khwalitheithifi o dirišitšwe nyakišišong ye. Datha e kgobokeditšwe go tšwa go batšwasehlabelo ba seswai (8) bao ba hweditšwego ka mokgwa wa go tšea mehlala wo o nago le morero, wo e sego wa kgonagalo. Tshekatsheko ya diteng tša khwalitheithifi ya datha ye e kgobokeditšwego e dirilwe ka go šomiša software ya ATLAS.TI. Dikhwetšo di laetša gore balaodi ba tša lefapha la merero ya bašomi ka lekaleng la setšhaba ba tseba ka ga boleng le go šoma gabotse ga didirišwa tša monagano tshepetšong ya go thwala bašomi. Le ge go le bjalo, taolo ye e lokilego le tirišo ya didirišwa tša monagano di sa phenkgišanwa ka lekaleng la setšhaba. Didirišwa tša monagano gantši di tšewa bjalo ka tše di tšeago lehlakore le tša kgethollo

ka lebaka la matseno a tšona a histori le tšhomišompe ya nakong e fetilego ya go bea badudi ba naga boemong bjo bo sa lokago bao ba bego ba se na ditokelo goba menyetla nakong e fetilego. Matshwenyego a tlaleletšo a akaretša tirišo ya melawana ya maleba ya boitshwaro ya diteko tša monagano, go fapana ga setšo, go se swane maemong a go bala le go ngwala le thuto, le go se tlwaelane le tshepedišo ya go dira diteko tša monagano gare ga bašomi ba maemo a tlase. Dikakanyetšo tša ditshenyagalelo le tšona di na le seabe go dikgopolo tše mpe ka ga diteko tša monagano, ka ge tshepetšo e bonwa e le ye e bitšago tšhelete ye ntši go lekala la setšhaba. Nyakišišo ye e gatelela gape gore ka lebaka la go hloka tlhokomelo ya ka gare ya tshepedišo ya go dira diteko tša monagano ka lekaleng la setšhaba, didirišwa tša monagano di hlokomologwa bjalo ka didirišwa tše bohlokwa tša diphetho tša go thwala bašomi bao ba nago le tsebo. Ka fao, kgoro ya kelo ya monagano e swanetše go hlongwa ka lekaleng la setšhaba go laola le go hlokomela dikelo ka moka tša monagano tshepetšong ya go thwala bašomi. Thuto ye e tsenya letsogo go tsebo ye e lego gona ka ga ditemogo mabapi le tšhomišo ya didirišwa tša monagano mo tshepedišong ya go thwala bašomi, e godiša temošo ka lefapheng la mmušo ka ga gore go ka laolwa gakaone tshepedišo ya diteko tša didirišwa tša monagano, gomme e tsoša kgahlego go tšwa go ditsebi tšeo di ka nyakago go hlahloba ditaba tšeo di amanago le nyakišišo ye.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: didirišwa tša monagano, *tshepetšo ya go thwala bašomi, lekala la setšhaba, Afrika Borwa, go thwala le kgetho, balaodi ba methopo ya bašomi*

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Chapter 1

Scientific Orientation of the Research

Background and motivation

Psychometric instruments, also known as psychometric- or psychological tests, are defined by various authors such as Cohen et al. (2021); Hussain (2021); Reuben and Eremie (2020); and Theresa (2017), as instruments that are used to assess the attributes, abilities and behaviours of a person. Cohen et al. (2021) defined a psychometric instrument as a measuring device designed to assess psychological variables such as intelligence, personality, aptitude, interest and values, whereas Hussain (2021) defined it as a standardised tool that is used to assess human characteristics, utilising either the quantitative or the qualitative approach. According to Reuben and Eremie (2020), a psychometric instrument is a tool used to gather data about individuals, and a method used by researchers to sample and quantify human behaviour to make decisions about a particular construct or variable. Theresa (2017) regards a psychometric instrument as a test that is able to predict a person's intellectual capability, emotional and psychomotor behaviours. A psychometric instrument is therefore defined as a device that is administered to an individual for various purposes such as to obtain the individual's psychological attributes such as personality traits, cognitive capabilities, interest and values, or for research purposes or for psychodiagnosis. To serve its purpose, a psychometric instrument needs to be administered to an individual. This administration process is called psychometric testing. According to Cohen et al. (2021), psychometric testing is the process whereby a device, designed to obtain a sample of behaviour, is utilised to measure psychological variables. Gallagher and Yalch (2022) regard psychometric testing as a core of applied psychology and defined it as a process whereby one or more psychometric instruments are administered to obtain information about an individual's cognitive abilities, personality traits and other attributes. Psychometric testing is, therefore, a process of utilising a psychometric instrument to achieve a particular psychological goal.

Based on the nature of its purpose, psychometric testing is utilised in various domains such as the workplace settings, educational settings, clinical settings and forensic settings. To remain focused on the study, only the use of psychometric testing in the workplace setting was outlined from various professionals such as Baron et al. (2020), Cohen et al. (2021), Foxcroft and Modack (2018), Hernández et al. (2020), and Reuben and Eremie (2020). These authors agree that, in the workplace setting, psychometric testing is regarded as helpful in recruitment and selection, for development and promotional purposes, for performance appraisal and in predicting risk behaviours that could be detrimental to organisational goals.

Based on the aim of the study, the main focus of the discussion will be on psychometric testing in the workplace, particularly in the context of recruitment and selection, a key function of human resource management.

Psychometric instruments were initially used during the First World War for selection purposes, but they are currently used for personnel selection in both the public and private spheres (Elosua et al., 2025). This is because it has been scientifically proven to provide accurate information on the competencies and suitability of candidates for a specific position (Elosua et al., 2025). Additionally, Chipana-Castillo et al. (2021) mentioned that the proven effectiveness of psychometric instruments in the last decades resulted in the confident use of the instruments in both the private and public sectors when selecting personnel for employment purposes.

The use of psychometric instruments is prevalent globally, and locally in South Africa. This is evidenced by Margo and Vella (2020) highlighting that, internationally, many companies have adopted the use of psychometric instruments as, amongst others, a tool utilised to attract, screen, recruit and retain skilful employees. Margo and Vella (2020) further mentioned that research evidence from studies conducted by Dullu (2017), and Jacobs (2018), has indicated that over 80% of companies in America and more than 70% of companies in the UK utilise psychometric testing in their recruitment processes. Likewise, Batsukh (2016) mentioned that over 80% of companies in the USA and 75% of companies in the UK utilise psychometric instruments to gather

important information from both potential and current employees, while Nawaz (2023) mentioned that 75% of companies in the UK utilise psychometric testing to predict job performance and to search for talent. Furthermore, Nawaz (2023) stated that the use of psychometric instruments for recruitment and selection purposes, leadership development, learning, training and evaluating individuals' performance is popular in countries such as Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands.

In the South African context, Foxcroft and Modack (2018) highlighted that a study conducted by England and Zietsman (1995) indicated that 90% of the human resource practitioners surveyed indicated that they used tests for job selection purposes.

The perceptions on the effective use of psychometric tests for recruitment and selection purposes differ worldwide. Due to the scarcity of literature on psychometric testing in Malta, Margo and Vella (2020) conducted a study to gain insight into the use of psychometric testing for recruitment and selection by Maltese organisations. Participants in the study comprised two local organisations that use psychometric instruments and two local organisations that do not use psychometric instruments and one psychometric service provider (Margo & Vella, 2020). The outcome of the study revealed that participants are aware that wrong appointments will be too costly, thereby resulting in the restart of the recruitment process; however, understanding the fact that the recruitment process is already expensive, adding on the cost of psychometric instruments will increase the already expensive recruitment costs (Margo & Vella, 2020). The time factor was also highlighted as another contributing factor to the low use of psychometric instruments in companies. Psychometric instruments are regarded as time-consuming to complete the recruitment process due to the time needed to complete the test, for organisations to analyse them and interpret the results based on the requirements for the job (Margo & Vella, 2020). Lack of qualified professionals to administer and interpret psychometric tests was highlighted as another major limitation that contributed to the low use of psychometric testing in Malta (Margo & Vella, 2020). Participants highlighted that, due to a lack of qualified professionals in psychometric

testing, improper use of psychometric instruments forms negative reactions when inappropriate questionnaires are used (Margo & Vella, 2020).

A study conducted by Chipana-Castillo et al. (2021) on the effectiveness of psychometric instruments for the selection of personnel for jobs in the retail sector in the Department of Junín, South America, entailed employees of companies in the retail sector who are responsible for the recruitment and selection process. From the analysis of the study, it was confirmed that personality tests have a positive impact on the effectiveness of personnel selection (Chipana-Castillo et al., 2021). Personality factors were found capable of predicting job performance, success in training, staff turnover, job satisfaction, counterproductive behaviours and career line potential (Chipana-Castillo et al., 2021).

O'Brien (2017) mentioned that personality tests and integrity tests are often used by organisations to predict the possibility of white-collar crime behaviours from new applicants. These tests are currently utilised by US organisations as a set of pre-employment tests to pre-screen candidates for hire (O'Brien, 2017).

Sartori et al. (2020) reported that, despite their usefulness in human resource management, psychometric instruments are rarely used. This is supported by a study conducted in Italy among human resource managers, whereby interviews were regarded as effective to assess candidates' psychological characteristics, while psychometric instruments were perceived as lacking fit with specific organisational needs or too time-consuming concerning administration and analysis of the results (Sartori et al., 2020).

Memon et al. (2018) conducted a study about the effectiveness of psychometric testing in the recruitment process in Pakistan. The population of the study consisted of hiring managers in the banking sector who are using psychometric testing in their hiring process, hiring managers who are using other traditional recruitment methods, and employees who have done psychometric testing for hiring purposes (Memon et al., 2018). The research findings revealed that there is sufficient awareness on the effectiveness of psychometric testing in the banking sector, however,

only a limited number of banks use psychometric instruments in their hiring process and certain banks were planning to implement them in their hiring process, while other banks regarded them as time-consuming and costly (Memon et al., 2018). In conclusion, Memon et al. (2018) stated that although psychometric instruments are widely used in Western countries and are globally accepted recruitment tools, fewer organisations in Pakistan choose to utilise them in their recruitment and selection process.

Gul and Ghazal (2022) conducted research on the current state of recruitment and selection practices in Pakistan organisations with a population of senior human resource managers from both national and multinational companies. The findings on this study showed that companies are interested in the cost-effective methods of recruitment and selection that involve the use of psychometric instruments (Gul & Ghazal, 2022). However, a lack of psychometric instruments that meet all scientific requirements, such as appropriateness, validity and reliability, affects their organisational effectiveness (Gul & Ghazal, 2022).

Risavy et al. (2019) conducted a study with participants working in Canada and the US. The study was an extension of the research conducted by Dickmann and Konig (2015) about the beliefs of human resource practitioners in Germany regarding personality testing (Risavy et al., 2019). The survey conducted by Risavy et al. (2019), therefore, involved human resource practitioners in Canada and the US, and the focus of the study was on their perceptions relating to personality testing in selection. The research findings revealed that all three countries, namely, Germany, Canada, and the US, viewed personality testing as effective for the management of employee selection (Risavy et al., 2019).

In South Africa, perceptions on the effective use of psychometric instruments for purposes of recruitment and selection cannot be clearly explained without highlighting the historic political stance of the country during its introduction into the country. The use of psychological assessment in South Africa dates back to as early as 1915, when the country was still governed by the apartheid regime (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). The introduction of psychometric instruments came

about through the work of a group of researchers whose interest was in intellectual assessment (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). These researchers administered psychometric instruments that were developed on and normed for White children to Black children (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). Laher and Cockcroft (2014, p.304) stated that “the lower scores obtained by Black children were then used as evidence for the inferiority of the native intellect and that marked the start of an era of inequality for psychological assessment in South Africa”. Psychometric instruments were then continuously normed and standardised on White population samples and were unapologetically administered to Black individuals (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). These psychometric instruments, particularly measures of intellectual ability, which were developed and standardised on educated Westernised South Africans were administered to illiterate, uneducated, or poorly educated South Africans, and the results were used as justification for job reservation and the superiority of one group over another (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Laher & Cockcroft, 2013; 2014). Between the period 1960 and 1984, many psychometric instruments were developed, but with South Africa still being in a racially segregated era of apartheid, Western models were used to develop instruments, with little attention to ensure that test tasks became meaningful to the diverse population of South Africa (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Foxcroft and Modack (2018), and Laher and Cockcroft (2014), reported that this historical discrimination, unfairness and misuse of psychometric instruments in South Africa resulted in the development of negative perceptions about the value that these tools can add.

In 1974, the Health Professions Act was promulgated, and it professionalised the field of psychology and established a Psychological Board of Psychology to regulate training requirements and standards for registration as a psychologist (Laher & Cockcroft, 2014). Additionally, Laher (2024) mentioned that the Professional Board for Psychology is responsible for regulating psychometric testing and assessment in South Africa, formulating ethical guidance on the use of psychometric instruments, and classifying psychometric instruments through the Psychometrics Committee.

Post apartheid in 1994, the control of and development of assessment measures became a contested terrain, and the issue of test use in the workplace and education had been placed under the spotlight (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). To address the improper use of psychometric testing in the workplace, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998) was promulgated. This Act aims to achieve equity in the workplace, by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment (Government Gazette, 1998). Particularly, Chapter 2, Section 8 of the Act, as stipulated by the Government Gazette (1998), states that

“Psychological testing and other similar forms of assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable; (b) can be applied fairly to employees; and (c) is not biased against any employee or group.”

In 2013, the Act was amended to be the Employment Equity Amendment Act of 2013 (Act No 47 of 2013). Contained in the amended Act is the inclusion of subsection (d) in Section 8, which states that, before use, psychometric instruments and other similar forms of assessment should be certified by the Health Professions Council of South Africa, or any other body which may be authorised by law to certify those tests or assessments (Government Gazette, 2014). This addition, according to the Association of Test Publishers (2017), caused a problem for test publishers and psychological practitioners due to the lack of clarity and availability of responsible bodies to classify and certify such psychometric instruments. In response to the chaos caused by the amendment of the Act, the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) challenged the added subsection (d) through the High Court and the court ruled in favour of the Association of Test Publishers that sub-section (d) of the Act be declared null and void and that sub-clauses (a), (b) and (c) of the Act continue unchanged (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

An urgent need for a test certification process had arisen, given the revised HPCSA mandate. A task force was convened to address this need, that is, to consider the development of assessment standards in South Africa and to provide a platform for public reviews of tests and the certification

of tests (Laher, 2024). The task force comprised representatives from South African professional societies, namely, the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology (SIOPSA) and its interest group, People Assessments in Industry (PAI), the South African Association of Test Publishers (ATP) and the International Test Commission (ITC) (Laher, 2024). One of the recommendations of the task force was the formation of an independent, non-regulatory structure for developing assessment standards and certifying tests against these (Laher, 2024). This structure was constituted as the Assessment Standards South Africa (ASSA), and a non-governmental and non-profit organisation (NPO) (Laher, 2024). ASSA aims to assist in implementing a robust, best-practice and technology-enabled process that could be used to review people assessment instruments and tests (Laher, 2024). Furthermore, based on the experience in other countries, the voluntary submission of assessment instruments for objective evaluation and reviews will raise the general standard and awareness of using quality tests (Laher, 2024).

Problem Statement and Motivation for the Research

South Africa is more than 30 years into democracy. According to Laher (2024), this political development thus therefore presents a fair platform to reflect on psychological assessment in South Africa prior its misuse to exclude and support racially discriminatory policies against particularly black South Africans. Since the end of apartheid, transformation efforts were made and are continuing to be made to ensure that psychological assessment is applicable to a multicultural and multilingual South Africa (Laher, 2024). Such efforts are evidenced on research studies published in journals such as the South African Journal of Psychology and the Journal of Psychology in Africa where various psychological assessments were investigated, the African Journal of Psychological Assessment having recorded majority of submissions from South Africa, and furthermore the annual congresses from various bodies of psychology such as the Psychology Society of South Africa (PsySSA), the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology in South Africa (SIOPSA), the South African Neuropsychological Association

(SACNA), and the International Test Commission conference where the scope of assessment in the country is discussed. Additionally, the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act to redress past imbalances regarding the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Laher, 2024; Nzimande et al., 2025).

Despite these positive developments to regulate the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa, psychological assessment in South Africa is still faced with challenges of heavy reliance on etic tests with no psychometric properties established in the South Africa context, normative issue whereby there are either few, or outdated, or South African norms established from small and specific samples, language barrier whereby tests are English based which is not the first language for the majority of the population, tests content are Eurocentric, and high purchase tests pricing from local test distributors (Laher, 2024).

Despite its fair application limitations in South Africa, psychometric instruments in South Africa are still regarded as valuable tools to effectively and objectively assess the individuals' inherent job attributes such as attitudes, aptitude, skills, personality, beliefs, values, and motivation (Chipana-Castillo et al., 2021; Magro & Vella, 2020; Memon et al., 2018; Saha, 2020).

The public sector is now faced with a challenge whereby people are hired or promoted into critical positions which they are not qualified for, and this affects the government performance (Jarbandhan, 2022). The study on the recruitment and selection of the public protector by Bazana and Reddy (2021) is evidence of this. The former South African public protector Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane could not finish her term in the Office of the Public Protector because she was declared not a fit and proper person for the position (Bazana & Reddy, 2021). This satisfaction was compromised by the fact that only the unstructured interview method was used during the selection process, no scientific method was used to assess critical attributes such as integrity, reliability and honesty (Bazana & Reddy, 2021).

Furthermore, psychometric instruments appear less utilised for recruitment and selection purposes in the public sector. This is evident in the recruitment and selection policy of various

government departments, such as the Department of Public Service and Administration (2012), the Department of Employment and Labour (2019), the National Prosecution Authority (2012), and the Department of Higher Education and Training (2019). The recruitment and selection policy of these respective government departments highlighted the use of a competency framework for senior management candidates only. The competency framework aims to assess the skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of potential senior management candidates, to ensure that the appointed candidate can function proficiently at the strategic level (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2003).

Exclusion of the psychometric testing as a compulsory technique during the recruitment and selection process of employment shows that the use thereof for employment purposes, particularly in the public sector, is a debatable topic.

Research Aim and Research Questions

General aim

The general aim of this research is to understand the challenges and concerns that are faced by the public sector in integrating psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process.

Specific research questions

This research was designed to answer the following literature and empirical questions:

1. What does the current recruitment and selection method used by the public sector entail?
2. What are the reasons why psychometric instruments are not integrated into the employee appointment process in the public sector?
3. What are the views or opinions of human resource managers about the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process?

Research Design

The research followed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is valuable when the researchers have “little knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation, when there is a

problem or issue that needs to be explored, when we need to understand a complex issue in greater detail which can only be obtained through talking directly with people and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature, when we wish to hear people's voices involving marginalized and vulnerable people who may not have any opportunity to participate in a large scale research, and when there is a need to develop theories that help to explain and capture the complexity of the problem of certain individuals or population groups that existing theories do not adequately explain" (Pranee, 2020, p.3).

The aim of the research guides the researcher to adopt a particular type of qualitative research method to collect qualitative research data.

Qualitative research methods that can be adopted are explained as follows:

- The in-depth interviewing method: this is a face-to-face and one-on-one interaction between a researcher and the participant, aimed to capture participants' thoughts, perceptions, feelings and experiences (Pranee, 2020).
- Focus group interview: this is an organised discussion among a selected small group of about six to ten individuals on a particular topic, to obtain information about their views (Pranee, 2020).
- Unobstructive methods: this method does not require active participation of individuals; it collects data from texts, newspapers, magazines, historical documents, books, diaries, literature, photos, graphs, music, cinema, television and websites (Pranee, 2020).
- Narrative enquiry methodology – life and oral history, life story and biographical research: this is a method that examines the entire life story of an individual, expressed in lived and told stories, interviews, observations and documents (Pranee, 2020).
- Memory-work: this method uses memories as a source of knowledge and accepts the notion that what a person remembers is a construction of self (Pranee, 2020).

- Ethnography: this is a method used to describe a group or culture to understand another way of life from the native point of view (Pranee, 2020).
- Participatory action research: this method is aimed at creating new forms of knowledge from understandings and experiences of marginalised, deprived and oppressed groups and classes, and to find ways in which this knowledge can transform social realities (Pranee, 2020).
- Qualitative case study research: this is a method used to obtain contextual phenomenal knowledge about a person, a social group, an organisation, an institution or a political event (Pranee, 2020).
- Grounded theory research: this is a systematic method of collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories that are grounded in the data (Pranee, 2020).

Based on the aim of the research, the researcher adopted the in-depth interviewing method. This approach is exploratory and creates a platform where participants freely voice their opinions, perceptions and views on psychometric testing for recruitment and selection purposes.

Research context

The public sector, also referred to as the Government, is divided into three spheres, namely, the national government, the provincial government and the local government. These spheres of Government possess policymaking and management powers in their level of functioning and they are defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as distinctive, interdependent and interrelated (Mlambo & Maserumule, 2024). The National Government (2020) stipulates that the national government of the Republic of South Africa comprises of 40 national departments, and the Department of Public Service and Administration is, amongst others, one of them. Concerning the study, this Department was the gatekeeper for the research due to its mandatory purpose, which, among others, is to issue to the Public Service, directives concerning human resource management practices.

Sampling

The purposeful, non-probability sampling strategy were used for the research. Heads of the recruitment and selection subsection within the human resource management section of each respective national department formed the research sample. The public sector comprises of 40 national departments; therefore, the 40 recruitment and selection section managers from each national department, formed the population of this research. The researcher aimed to start with interviews of 20 participants for the sample until saturation is reached.

Data collection

Data was collected through qualitative semi – structured interviews, using the protocol approach. The protocol approach means that specific procedures and rules were followed to collect data. Open-ended questions were posed, thereby allowing participants the liberty to voice their perceptions, views, and opinions.

Data analysis

Data was analysed using the qualitative content analysis method. Content analysis is defined as a subjective interpretation of the content of data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Groenland & Dana, 2019; Shava et al., 2021). Brough (2019, p. 211) defined it as a “process of representing message content with abbreviated, convenient symbols”. According to Groenland and Dana (2019, pp. 113 - 114), content analysis is a flexible method that can be applied to any written data, including pictures, videos and situations, and can “access deep individual or collective structures such as values, intentions, attitudes, and cognitions”. Shava et al. (2021, p.554) added that “content analysis is a flexible method of analysing qualitative data which uses inductive and deductive approaches or a combination of both approaches in data analysis”. Content analysis is therefore a flexible method of subjectively interpreting the content of the qualitative data and then classify it into codes and theme.

Ethical considerations

Roller and Lavrakas (2015, p. 341) highlighted that it is the responsibility of the qualitative researcher to “honestly assure participants of their confidentiality and right to privacy, safety from harm, and the right to terminate their voluntary participation at any time with no consequences from doing so”. Furthermore, Roller and Lavrakas (2015) mentioned that actions to be taken to ensure such assurance should be explained.

Actions that were taken by the researcher to ensure the protection of participants are as follows:

- i. Before participation in the research, informed consent was received from participants. The informed consent form was a one-page document, accompanied by a participant information sheet that clearly explained the purpose and the benefits of the study, why the participant is deemed the right candidate for the study, the nature of their involvement in the study, their rights, and assurance of confidentiality throughout the research process. The researcher e-mailed these documents to participants, for them to be informed about the study and to clarify their misunderstandings and concerns before data collection. Signed consent forms were received back from participants via e-mail and others were collected physically from participants before data collection.
- ii. Copies of letters/documents of approval to conduct the study from both the institution (UNISA) and the Department of Public Service and Administration were made available for perusal by the potential participants to confirm that the study is legitimate.
- iii. No participants were coerced to participate in the study, as this would jeopardise the quality of data. This factor was made clear to participants in the participant information sheet. Interview meetings were scheduled at the convenience of participants.
- iv. Participants' concerns were addressed to the satisfaction of participants before the commencement of the interview for data collection.
- v. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, privately, and participants were not allowed to seek help from other colleagues to answer questions. It was indicated before the

interviews that their individual views are sought, and their contributions are valuable data needed for the study.

- vi. Participants' anonymity was maintained by attaching codes to participants. Access to electronic data was limited through a password and hard copy data was stored in a lockable cabinet.

Dissertation Layout

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation of the research

This chapter discussed the background and motivation for the research, presented literature regarding the phenomenon, as well as the research problem, research aim and methodology, and the expected contribution of this research.

Chapter 2: Psychometric testing and Psychological assessment

This chapter provided insight into psychometric testing and assessment, highlighting the difference between psychometric testing and psychological assessment, and the history of its introduction. Ethical use of these practices was addressed, thereby redressing past imbalances caused by the misuse of psychometric instruments. The test adaptation guidelines were explained.

Chapter 3: Value of psychometric testing

The focus of this chapter was on the value of psychometric testing. Psychometric testing is regarded as a useful tool in various platforms of applications, such as in the workplace setting, for selection and development; in early childhood; in the school setting; in court; in a clinical setting; and for research purposes.

Chapter 4: Employee appointment process in the public sector

This chapter provided insight into the employee appointment process in the public sector regarding the various stakeholders that direct the process from a legislative level to the implementation phase. The importance of adopting a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy that includes psychometric testing during the hiring process was highlighted.

Chapter 5: Research design

This chapter gave insight into the research design and methodology applied in the study, the sampling process and the data collection method.

Chapter 6: Data analysis

This chapter focused on the process of data analysis using the Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS), ATLAS.ti.

Chapter 7: Interpretation of data and discussion of findings

This chapter presented the discussion of findings through the interpretation of data, linking it to key citations from the literature.

Chapter 8: Summary of major findings, recommendations and conclusion

In this chapter, a summary of the major findings of the study was provided; recommendations and concluding remarks were highlighted.

Summary

In summary, the focus of this chapter was on providing insight into the research problem, the history of psychological assessment in South Africa, together with the challenges associated with such testing. Furthermore, the chapter elaborated on the context and nature of the research, and the expected contribution of this research was described. Lastly, the layout of the ensuing chapters was presented.

Chapter 2

Psychometric Testing and Psychological Assessment

Introduction

Psychometric testing is distinct from psychological assessment. Psychometric testing is a process of utilising solely psychometric instruments to measure specific psychological attributes and abilities, whereas a psychological assessment collectively utilises various psychology-related forms or approaches to evaluate the individual.

According to Cohen et al. (2021), psychometric testing is the process whereby a device designed to obtain a sample of behaviour is utilised to measure psychological variables and to predict future behaviour, whereas, Gallagher and Yalch (2022) regard psychometric testing as a core of applied psychology and define it as a process whereby one or more psychometric instruments are administered to a person to gather information about their cognitive abilities, personality traits and other attributes. According to Kenku et al. (2026), psychometric testing is a systematic process whereby standardised instruments are used to measure psychological attributes such as cognitive abilities, personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioural tendencies. Psychometric testing is therefore a process of utilising a psychometric instrument to identify abilities and traits to predict job performance and suitability for specific roles.

Psychological assessment is defined by Cohen et al. (2021) as the process of gathering psychology-related data about an individual through the utilisation of tools such as psychometric instruments, interviews and case studies, and then integrate data gathered to make a psychological evaluation about the individual. Gallagher and Yalch (2022) regard psychological assessment as the process of gathering information about an individual to develop an overall understanding of such an individual regarding their past experiences, their present problems and future goals. Psychological assessment is therefore a process whereby various approaches are used to gather psychology-related information about an individual to enable informed psychological evaluation.

Cohen et al. (2021) defined a psychometric instrument as a measuring tool designed to assess psychological variables such as intelligence, personality, aptitude, interest or values. Hussain (2021) defined it as a standardised tool that is used to assess human characteristics, utilising either the quantitative or the qualitative approach. Theresa (2017) regards a psychometric instrument as a tool that is able to measure an individual's cognitive ability, affective and psychomotor behaviours. According to Reuben and Eremie (2020), psychometric instruments are used to gather data about individuals and are methods used by researchers to sample and quantify human behaviour to make decisions about a particular construct or variable. A psychometric instrument is therefore defined as a device that is administered to an individual for various purposes such as to obtain the individual's psychological attributes such as personality traits, cognitive capabilities, interest and values, or for research purposes or for psychodiagnosis. Psychometric instruments are uniquely designed and can take various forms depending on their purpose or goal. Such forms are mentioned by Baron et al. (2018) as true-false inventories, rating scales, actual tests, questionnaires, ink dots or images that the test taker must respond to verbally, blocks or puzzle pieces that the test taker can manipulate, and printed items that require some type of written response.

Reuben and Eremie (2020) mentioned that the most important aspect in testing is the usefulness of the psychometric instruments to the individual or the society. To ensure its capability and enhanced value, psychometric instruments should, therefore, satisfy specific scientific criteria. From a psychological point of view, a psychometric instrument is considered sound due to its reliability and validity (Cohen et al., 2021). Nzimande et al. (2025) highlighted that the value of a psychometric instrument is dependent on its validity and reliability. Gallagher and Yalch (2022) added that these two properties determine the suitability of a psychometric instrument. Cohen et al. (2021) further mentioned that high coefficients of the reliability and validity result in the tests declared psychometrically sound for a particular purpose. The authors, Cohen et al. (2021), and Gallagher and Yalch (2022), defined reliability as the consistency of a measure, whereas validity

is defined as the extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure. A psychometric instrument must therefore be certified reliable and valid before it can be declared suitable to be used or administered.

According to Cohen et al. (2021) and Hussain (2021), a good psychometric instrument is a user-friendly one, one that is easily administered, scorable and interpretable. Reuben and Eremie (2020) added that, to enable the usefulness of psychometric testing, standardised stimuli and techniques of administration, scoring and interpretation should be utilised. Cohen et al. (2021) and Hussain (2021) added that a good psychometric instrument should measure what it purports to measure and, where applicable, have normative data with which the results of the test-taker will be compared. In addition to the fact that a psychometric instrument must be certified reliable and valid, standardised administrative procedure, including scoring and interpretation of results should be set.

Steyn and De Bruin (2020) highlighted that of important to note is that decisions will follow from the scores of the psychometric instruments. It is therefore essential, according to Cohen et al. (2021), that psychometric instruments be useful to help make better decisions about test-takers. Foxcroft and Modack (2018) added that such better decisions can only be made if psychometric testing is conducted by well-trained assessment professionals utilising psychometric instruments that are culturally appropriate, psychometrically sound, fair and ethical. Additionally, Moerdyk (2022) highlighted that better decisions can be made if psychometric instruments are cross-culturally fair, which means equally valid across groups of people with different cultural backgrounds, and the capability to do the assessment in the language of the instrument.

History of Psychometric Testing – Leading to the Promulgation of the Employment Equity Act

The origin of psychometric testing and psychological assessment dates back to 1905 in France (Cohen et al., 2021; and Moerdyk, 2022). However, in Africa, the use of psychometric instruments records as early as 1915 in South Africa, and 1917 elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa (Foxcroft &

Modack, 2018). During this period, South Africa was still governed by the apartheid regime, and which affected the country's administration in all spheres. During those years, psychometric testing in South Africa was developed in an environment characterised by unequal access to resources, where the distribution of resources favoured certain racial categories while disadvantaging other racial categories (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Therefore, the administration of psychometric instruments became unfair and biased to the disadvantaged population of the country, while working in favour of certain racial groups.

Combrinck (2020, p.1) stated that "apartheid and colonialism left South Africa and its neighbours with a complex and somewhat disturbing history of assessment". This unsettlement emanated from the outcome of World War I, whereby professionals were requested to utilise psychometric instruments developed by the military for use in schools and industry (Cohen et al., 2021).

Despite its unfair utilisation, the use of psychometric testing became prevalent after World War II (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). During those periods, psychometric instruments, such as the Personnel Research Sections (PRS) of the Leather Industries Research Institute (LIRI) and the Aptitude Test Section (ATS) of the South African Air Force (SAAF) were established (Moerdyk, 2022). In 1946, the resources of the PRS and the ATS were integrated in the newly established organisation called the National Bureau of Personnel Research (NBPR) and, in 1948, the NBPR became the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) (Moerdyk, 2022). The NIPR and the Institute for Psychological and Edumetric Research (IPER) were mandated to develop psychometric instruments in South Africa (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). While the NIPR focused on developing instruments for industry, the IPER developed instruments for the educational and clinical spheres (Moerdyk, 2022). Both these industries were later incorporated into the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Moerdyk, 2022).

In attempting to resolve the matter of unfair utilisation of psychometric testing, similar, but separate measures were developed for the various racial and language groups around the early 1980s (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). However, such psychometric instruments were developed

using the Western models, thus ignoring the requirement for African-centredness to ensure that the psychometric instruments become meaningful to the diverse people of South Africa (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Around 1986, the issue of culturally biased testing surfaced (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). There was a growing perception that the Government uses psychometric testing as a tool to disadvantage black South Africans from occupational and educational opportunities (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Laher (2024) added that such abuse of psychometric testing then resulted to the unions developing mistrust of the discipline and arguing that it must be banned. Consequently, the majority of the population of South Africa developed a negative perception regarding the usefulness of psychometric instruments and they began to reject their use altogether. (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Post the election of South Africa's first democratic government in 1994, the issue of equity was expressed to redress past imbalances (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). The Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) was promulgated to ensure equality for all South African citizens. Regarding psychometric testing and psychological assessment, section 8 of the Act stipulates that:

“Psychological testing and other similar forms or assessments of an employee are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used: (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable; (b) can be applied fairly to all employees; (c) is not biased against any employee or group” (Government Gazette, 1998).

The Act was amended in 2013, to the Employment Equity Amendment Act (No. 47 of 2013), following, amongst others, the addition of clause “d” to section 8 of the Act. The amended Act highlighted that psychological testing and other similar forms or assessments of an employee are prohibited, unless the test or assessment being used: (d) has been certified by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) or any other body which may be authorised by law to certify those tests or assessments’ (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

According to the press release titled 'Association of Test Publishers of South Africa (ATP SA) wins challenge of Employment Equity Act (EEA) legislation', the impact of the addition of clause "d" to the Employment Equity Act resulted in some of the following dilemmas for test publishers and psychologists who use assessments:

1. There was no clarity in terms of how 'other similar assessments' would be certified by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). According to the ATP SA, the HPCSA has no process or authority to classify or certify 'other assessments.'
2. It was unclear what was meant by: 'or any other body which may be authorised by law to certify those tests or assessments.' The ATP SA stated that no such body exists or existed or seemed to be planned to be identified or established soon.
3. In essence, the HPCSA did not have an effective test certification process to fulfil the requirements of the additional legislation specified in section "d". The ATP SA mentioned that there was no clear and detailed documentation of the criteria against which tests are evaluated. Thus, there is no guarantee that after test publishers have made efforts to follow international best practice standards in test development, revision and validation, their tests will appear on the list any time shortly because feedback received is usually unclear and sometimes contrary to international standards in test evaluation (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

Due to these predicaments, some organisations and psychologists resorted to using old psychometric instruments, while others decided to freeze the assessment activity (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

The Association of Test Publishers (2017) reported that the ATP SA was then "concerned about the chaos caused by the amendment to the EEA and they initially approached the HPCSA to ask for clarity, insight and a possible moratorium in the implementation of the additional section 'd' until there was a test certification process to support the legislation." The outcome of the action was that the "HPCSA did not see itself as having the power to request or implement such a

moratorium, since the EEA falls under the Department of Labour's portfolio" (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

The Association of Test Publishers (2017) further reported that in December 2015 the ATP SA had no choice but to launch an application that "the amendment of section 8 of the EEA (section 'd') be declared null and void and of no force and effect, and that section 8 of the EEA as it was on 31 July 2014 will continue un-amended". This application was "opposed by the President, the Minister of Labour and the HPCSA" (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

The ATP SA therefore contested in court the addition of clause (d) in the Employment Equity Amendment Act (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). The Association of Test Publishers (2017) mentioned that the court application brought by ATP SA in the High Court, Pretoria, was heard on the 29th and 30th of November 2016. The ATP SA argued that clause (d) in the Act is beyond the responsibilities of the HPCSA, and the court ruled in favour of the ATP SA (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). The Association of Test Publishers (2017) stated that "on Tuesday, 2 May 2017, the court found in favour of ATP SA's application and granted the following order:

1. That the Proclamation 50 published in Government Gazette 37871 on 25 July 2014 is null and void and of no force or effect to the extent that it brings into operation the amendment of section 8 (clause "d") of the Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998 in terms of section 4 of the Employment Equity Amendment Act, 2013, Act 47 of 2013.

2. That Section 8 of the Employment Equity Act, Act 55 of 1998, as it pertained on 31 July 2014, continued (clauses "a" to "c"), and continues, unabated as from the aforesaid date.

Section 8 (d) was therefore rescinded (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Even though this rescindment gave test users the freedom to make use of tests that have not been placed on the HPCSA list of certified assessments, sections 8 (a), (b) and (c) of the EEA should be adhered to, that all assessments used in the workplace should satisfy all the elements of reliability, fairness and non-biased in the South African context (Association of Test Publishers, 2017).

The Ethical Use of Psychometric Testing and Psychological Assessment

Psychometric testing and psychological assessment are processes that are used to make psychology-related decisions about individuals. It is therefore essential, that such processes are undertaken ethically and fairly, to ensure the credibility of the results or outcome.

Nzimande et al. (2025) mentioned that cultural biasness in psychological assessment can lead to unfair discrimination of certain demographic groups, and this issue is crucial in the South African context where diversity, equity and inclusion are important priorities in policy development. Nzimande et al. (2025) mentioned that to minimise this challenge, culturally neutral or locally normed psychometric instruments should be employed. Furthermore, Nzimande et al. (2025) highlighted a need to ensure standardization in both the administration and scoring process of the psychometric instruments, to accommodate people with disabilities during the assessment process, and training human resource management personnel in unconscious bias awareness. Kenku et al. (2026) advised that reliance on standardised assessment tools can minimise the influence of unconscious bias in hiring decisions.

Reuben and Eremie (2020) reported that the testing profession has become strict and extra cautious when outlining the ethics and responsibility of test designers and test users. It is therefore essential, as highlighted by Cohen et al., (2021) that test developers and test users consider the stipulated rules and regulations, and professional codes of conduct for guidance in the use of tests and test scores.

Reuben and Eremie (2020) reported that the public interest in psychometric instruments had resulted in psychometric instruments' experts ensuring that the rights and dignity of the testee are protected. This is supported by Cohen et al. (2021) that legal and ethical considerations are a matter of concern to the public at large regarding issues of assessment. Therefore, it is empirical that countries have established legislation and bodies to protect the public against any misuse of psychometric testing and psychological assessments.

In South Africa, the fair and ethical use of psychometric instruments are regulated by the Employment Equity Act, chapter 2, section 8 and the Health Professions Act, annexure 12, section 5 (Laher, 2024). The Professional Board for Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) provides ethical guidelines that governs the psychological practice, test classification, and system-based testing (Laher, 2024).

In addition to the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998) and the Professional Board for Psychology, control on the use of psychometric testing and psychological assessment is also guided by, for example, the following:

“the International Test Commission’s International Guidelines for Test-use; the ITC’s Guidelines for Computer-based and Internet-delivered Testing (2006); the Ethical Rules of Conduct; the Code of Practice for Psychological and Other Similar Assessment in the Workplace; and the Guidelines for the Validation of Assessment Procedures” (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018, p.378).

The effectiveness of the legislation and controls governing psychometric testing and psychological assessment is dependent on the ethical use of psychometric instruments by various authorised stakeholders. In this regard, it is therefore expected that test users should ensure that psychometric instruments are administered by qualified practitioners who are able to correctly interpret assessment results and communicate outcomes in an empowering approach rather than insensitive and hurtful manner, and would ensure that the instrument materials are not accessible by unauthorised people (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

This responsibility is applicable globally. According to the American Psychology Association Ethical Standards, psychologists are expected to

“administer, adapt, score, interpret, and use psychological testing in the manner and purpose for which the selected tests and assessments were designed to be used as indicated by research; to select and use tests or assessments with members of populations for whom adequate reliability and validity of the test scores has been

established; and to select tests and assessments that are appropriate to the language preference and competence of the individuals being assessed” (Drogin, 2019, p. 395).

Furthermore, Reuben and Eremie (2020) highlighted that it is important that the test users take into consideration the psychometric properties of the psychometric instrument, to ensure that the instrument is valid and reliable to the population relevant to the individual taking the test.

To ensure the effectiveness of the legislation and controls governing psychometric testing and psychological assessment, it is the responsibility of the test developers to ensure that psychometric instrument materials are not released to the public before validity and reliability have been adequately established (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Additionally, Reuben and Eremie (2020) mentioned that test designers should ensure that test manuals have sufficient information regarding reliability and validity of the test, and sufficient administrative and scoring guidelines.

The role of test distributors in ensuring the effectiveness of the legislation and controls governing psychometric testing and psychological assessment, involves ensuring that the purchasing of psychometric instruments is restricted to appropriately trained professionals (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

In the workplace, the effectiveness of the legislation and controls governing psychometric testing and assessment can be ensured by those organisations utilising such psychological practices by ensuring that:

“it has an assessment policy in place that reflects fair, ethical practices; it employs assessment practitioners who are competent, who have been appropriately trained in the specific measures that they need to use, and who are mentored and supervised where necessary (especially when they are inexperienced); valid assessment measures are used for appropriate purposes; assessment results are used in a non-discriminatory manner; it has support mechanisms in place to assist assessment practitioners to build a research database that can be used to establish the fairness and efficacy of the measures used and the decisions made; it regularly monitors the extent to which its assessment

policy is being put into effect 'on the ground' and revises it where necessary"(Foxcroft & Modack, 2018, pp.171-172).

In complying with these statutory requirements, Cohen et al. (2021) mentioned that many large companies and organizations, including government agencies, would employ qualified assessment practitioners to ensure that their hiring and promotional decisions does not result in neither disparate treatment nor disparate impact. According to Cohen et al. (2021), disparate treatment refers to the hiring and promotional decision made by employer to purposefully disadvantage other employees; whereas disparate impact refers to the hiring and promotional decisions made by the employer that was not purposefully made to disadvantage other employees.

Memon et al. (2018) added that, in Pakistan, due to low level of capability to implement and administer psychometric testing, and to ensure continuous and professional use of psychometric testing, many organisations have outsourced their psychometric evaluations through HR consultancies.

Nzimande et al. (2025) suggested that if the public sector can thoroughly assess the validity and reliability of psychometric instruments, it can strengthen its selection process and ensures that it recruits the best candidate fit for the job to enhance organisational effectiveness.

In order to improve the effective and responsible application of psychometric instruments in the recruitment and selection process of personnel, Kenku et al. (2026) suggested the following:

- That organisations should employ psychometric instruments that satisfy the culture and language of the population they assess.
- Test practitioners/ users should continuously receive training on test administration, interpretation and ethical considerations.
- Organisations should comply with all legislative standards and regulations pertaining psychometric assessment.

- Psychometric testing should be integrated into the recruitment and selection framework.
- Psychometric instruments should be periodically reviewed to reflect on its validity with regard to evolving job requirements, cultural context and technological developments.
- Organisations should communicate clearly to candidates regarding the fair application, purpose and relevance of psychometric instruments.

Psychometric Instrument Development and Adaptation

Section 8 of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 is of interest in the cultural suitability of psychometric instruments in South Africa that all measures should promote equality, be bias-free for all, and be scientifically valid and reliable (Hill et al., 2021). It is for this reason that Laher and Cockcroft (2013) mentioned that assessment practitioners argue that issues of culture, education, and language result in the need to have emic (locally developed) psychometric instruments. However, Laher (2024) highlighted that even though local test development appears to be priority, etic psychometric instruments can be adapted and normed for the South African context. In support of this, Hernández et al. (2020) mentioned that test adaptations have recently become a common practice. The South African Personality Inventory (SAPI) project is an example of some action taken to ensure that psychometric instruments adhere to local legislation and can be administered validly and reliably in all 11 official languages (Hill et al., 2021).

In South Africa, many psychometric instruments were developed by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Post-apartheid, the HSRC went through restructuring, and the psychometric testing and psychological assessment unit gradually relinquished its role (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Moerdyk, 2022). This role was therefore taken over by test development and distribution agencies, such as Saville and Holdsworth Psychological Assessment in South Africa Limited (SHL), Psytech, Jopie van Rooyen & Partners SA and Mindmuzik Media (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Moerdyk, 2022).

South Africa is currently in possession of too few experts' test developers and is currently faced with the challenge of evolving the next generation of test developers (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Additionally, Laher (2024) highlighted that South Africa is still faced with challenges of heavy reliance on etic psychometric instruments whereby their psychometric properties have not been established to the dynamic context of the country hence no indication of possible adaptation of the instrument; the instrument will be utilised with either very few South African norms, outdated or norms based on a small and particular population; and instruments are mainly in English, which is not the first language of the majority of the population.

Due to the challenge of having scarce test developers, South Africa finds itself in a position where it must utilise international psychometric instruments. However, such tests should first be subjected to the adaptation process into the South African context, to ensure that test results are valid and reliable for test takers from diverse backgrounds (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Drogin (2019) added that when tests are administered across diverse populations, tests users are obliged to show some degree of equivalence between test takers and the population from which the test scores were validated, normed, and found to be reliable.

Test adaptation involves a process whereby a test developed in one context is changed to suit the cultural and linguistic capability of another context where the test is intended to be used (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Hernández et al. (2020) stated that the aim of the test adaptation process is to ensure that content and cultural meaning between the original and the translated/adapted test remain equivalent, such that scores across individuals from these different cultural groups can be compared.

Test adaptation is the process of translating a test from one language and culture to another, and it involves activities such as

“deciding whether or not a test in a second language and culture could measure the same construct in the first language; selecting translators; choosing a design for evaluating the work of test translators (e.g., forward and backward translations); choosing any necessary accommodations; modifying the test format; conducting the translation; checking the

equivalence of the test in the second language and culture and conducting other necessary validity studies” (International Test Commission, 2017, pp. 6-7).

Test adaptation is therefore a process whereby a psychometric instrument developed in one context is modified to suit the culture and language of the population of another context where the instrument is intended to be used, and to ensure that scores from the original and the modified instruments can be fairly comparable between individuals who took the instrument.

Test adaptation is essential, as it enhances fairness in assessment by providing the test taker with the opportunity to be assessed in the language of their preference, and it reduces the costs and saves time in developing a new measure (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Successful adaptation of a measure means that the adapted version is equivalent to the original version of that measure. Such a success is facilitated by a multidisciplinary team of experts in the construct to be measured by the psychometric instrument; experts in the target language in which the instrument needs to be translated; experts in the culture in which the instrument needs to be translated; and experts in the statistical procedures to be followed during the adaptation process (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Foxcroft and Modack (2018) highlighted that the adaptation of measures, and the detection and elimination of bias from measures, play a vital role in the transformation process of a multicultural society such as South Africa. In South Africa, such a responsibility is laid upon assessment practitioners, whereby they should ensure that the development and use of psychometric instruments, and the interpretation and reporting of instrument information, are non-discriminatory, unbiased and fair towards all South African citizens (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Hernández et al. (2020) highlighted that following good quality procedures is crucially important during the translation/adaptation process to prevent errors and to ensure that the adapted psychometric instrument is valid and useful and its scores can be comparable. Therefore, the International Test Commission (2017) provided guidelines that need to be followed during the psychometric instrument adaptation process as follows: Pre-condition guidelines; Test

Development guidelines; Confirmation guidelines; Administration guidelines; Score Scales and Interpretation guidelines; and Documentation guidelines.

Each of the guidelines is explained briefly as follows:

Pre-Condition Guidelines

The first step to the psychometric instrument adaptation process is to obtain the necessary permission from the test developer (International Test Commission, 2017). Secondly, is to establish a team of experts who are familiar with the language and culture of the population of interest, to ascertain if there is sufficient vocabulary in the intended language translation, and the legitimacy of the construct to be measured for that population of interest (International Test Commission, 2017). Thirdly, it is to identify irrelevant influences of any cultural and linguistic differences in the population of interest and minimise them as soon as possible (International Test Commission, 2017).

Test Development Guidelines

According to the Test Development guidelines as stipulated by the International Test Commission (2017), the translation and adaptation process should ensure that relevant experts are chosen to ensure proper translation of the test to the language of interest and proper test construction. Furthermore, the appropriate translation design and procedures, for example, forward and backward translation, should be employed to maximise the suitability of the test adaptation to the population of interest (International Test Commission, 2017).

Regarding Post translation, it needs to be established that the test instructions and item content have a similar meaning to the intended population. This can be ascertained through a variety of strategies, such as but not limited to the

“use of reviewers native to local culture and language; use of samples of bilingual respondents; use of local surveys to evaluate the test; and use of non-standard test administrations to increase acceptability and validity, interviews with the administrators

and the examinees to obtain their criticisms of the test itself” (International Test Commission, 2017, pp.13-14).

Additionally, it should be established that the test “item formats, rating scales, scoring categories, modes of administration and other procedures are suitable for all intended populations” (International Test Commission, 2017, p.14).

The final step of the psychometric instrument development guideline is to collect pilot data on the adapted test (International Test Commission, 2017). This final step, according to the International Test Commission (2017, p.15), is essential “to enable item analysis, reliability assessment and small-scale validity studies, so that any necessary revisions to the adapted test can be made”.

Confirmation Guidelines

The Confirmation Guidelines for test adaptation as stipulated by the International Test Commission (2017) advise that a large enough representative sample of the population of interest should be selected to ensure that validity and reliability studies and DIF studies are conducted, and to ensure that sufficient data can be collected to establish norms (if needed). The next step would then be to “provide relevant statistical evidence about the construct equivalence, method equivalence, and item equivalence for the intended population” (International Test Commission, 2017, p.18). Furthermore, the empirical validity and reliability, as well as evidence supporting the norms of the adapted version of the test, should be provided (International Test Commission, 2017). The International Test Commission (2017) further guides that, when linking score scales from different language versions of a test, an appropriate equating design and data analysis procedures should be utilised.

Administration Guidelines

According to the Administration guidelines, administration materials and instructions of the adapted version of the test need to be prepared to “minimize any culture- and language-related problems that are caused by administration procedures and response modes that can affect the validity of the inferences drawn from the scores” (The International Test Commission, 2017, p.24).

Furthermore, testing conditions that need to be closely followed should be specified for the population of interest (The International Test Commission, 2017).

Score Scales and Interpretation Guidelines

The Score Scales and Interpretation guidelines to be implemented during the psychometric instrument adaptation process as stipulated by the International Test Commission (2017) recommend that any group score differences need to be interpreted regarding all relevant available information; whereas scores across populations can be compared once the level of invariance on the scale on which scores are reported has been established.

Documentation Guidelines

According to the document guidelines as provided in the International Test Commission (2017), during the process of psychometric instrument adaption, there should be provision of technical documentation of any changes made, including sufficient evidence on how equivalence was obtained. Furthermore, test users should be provided with documentation that “supports good practice in the use of the adapted psychometric instrument with people in the context of the population of interest” (International Test Commission, 2017, p.28).

In support of the psychometric instrument adaptation process, Foxcroft and Modack (2018) have outlined the following steps that could be applied during the adaptation process of a psychometric instrument or measure:

- i. Review construct equivalence in the languages and cultures of interest
- ii. Decide if psychometric instrument adaptation is the best strategy
- iii. Choose a multidisciplinary expert team (in the construct domain of the measure, measurement and psychometrics and the languages and cultural groups for which the measure will be adapted)
- iv. Plan all the aspects of adaptation. This might require administering the original measure to a small sample from the target group for the adaptation and interviewing the test-takers to gain insight into how they experienced the measure.

- v. Adapt the psychometric instrument using appropriate approaches and methods
- vi. Review the adapted version and make necessary changes
- vii. Conduct a small 'try-out' of the adapted version and use the resultant information to guide further refinement.
- viii. Administer the refined, adapted version to a large sample of test-takers from the target population
- ix. Place scores of both the adapted and the original measure on a common scale
- x. Conduct a validation investigation, which includes investigations into bias and equivalence
- xi. Establish the psychometric properties of the adapted version
- xii. Generate the norms or set the performance standards or cut scores for the adapted version
- xiii. Document the process and prepare the manual for test users
- xiv. Submit the adapted version to the Psychometrics Committee of the Professional Board for Psychology for classification

The negative perceptions and criticisms about the value of psychological tests, together with the establishment of the Employment Equity Act, have influenced the practice of psychological assessment in South Africa positively with a notable increase in test bias studies (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). These made test practitioners to make an informed decision to use psychometric instruments fairly in a multicultural society, and researchers to adapt or develop culturally sensitive psychometric instruments (Moerdyk, 2022).

Studies were conducted by the research and development sections of the test development and distribution agencies, to ensure that international psychometric instruments can be adaptable to the South African context (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018). Such studies were conducted by South African universities, such as "UNISA, Nelson Mandela University, North-West University, Rhodes University, the University of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria University, the University of Johannesburg, the University of Stellenbosch, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in order to

research and adapt psychometric instruments, develop local norms, undertake local psychometric studies and develop indigenous tests” (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018, p.50). Additionally, organisations such as the South African Breweries and the South African Police Services (SAPS) undertook large-scale testing research, to provide psychometric information on the psychometric instruments that they use, investigate bias and adapt psychometric instruments (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

Summary

Psychometric testing is the administration of a psychometric instrument aiming to assess a person’s attributes, abilities and behaviours. Psychological assessment is distinctive from psychometric testing in that psychological assessment utilises collective platforms such as psychometric instruments, interviews, etc, to gather as much information as needed about an individual. The historic introduction of these processes in South Africa, in 1915, added to the already existing racial discrimination and segregation. However, the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 put the spotlight on the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa. The Act stipulates that, irrespective of its use, psychometric instruments must be scientifically valid and reliable, culturally equal for all, and bias-free. To satisfy this legislation, the development of emic psychometric instruments and the adaptation of etic psychometric instruments are options. The value of psychometric testing will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Value of Psychometric Testing

Introduction

Moerdyk (2022) reported that psychometric testing is generally useful to obtain accurate information to describe a situation, to understand reasons for the occurrence of behaviour, to make suggestions on ways to change an existing situation, to illustrate the influence of an intervention and to predict future behaviour. According to Chipana–Castillo et al. (2021), psychometric testing is an effective exercise that ensures the recruitment of staff with greater ability and skills that are consistent with performing the functions needed for success. Laher and Cockcroft (2013) reported that the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa is criticised due to standardisation issues; therefore, they are perceived as culturally biased.

Despite the critiques encountered, psychometric instruments have proven to be useful tools in recruitment and selection. Baron et al. (2018) regarded psychometric instruments as helpful to identify potential candidates who are suitable for the position. Chipana-Castillo et al. (2021), Kenku et al. (2026), Memon et al. (2018) and Saha (2020) alluded that psychometric instruments have emerged as strategic tools for assessing candidates' attributes, such as aptitude, personality, skills and motivation. All these attributes are impossible to assess objectively and scientifically by any other form of selection other than psychometric testing. This is supported by Magro and Vella (2020), who mentioned that psychometric instruments contribute to a holistic dimension through which one can comprehend individuals' attitudes, skills, values, beliefs and personality traits.

Perceptions about Psychometric Testing

In a study conducted in Italy among 21 Human Resource Managers and Recruiters, results showed that psychometric instruments were perceived as lacking a fit with specific organisational needs or too time-consuming regarding administration and analysis of results (Sartori et al.,

2020). Additionally, Memon et al. (2018) reported that psychometric instruments used in the recruitment process can be seen as invalid or fake.

Memon et al. (2018) conducted a study on the effectiveness of psychometric testing in the recruitment process in the banking sector. One of the objectives of the study was to reveal the difficulties faced by HR departments and to identify why they are still not considering psychometric instruments as recruitment and selection tools. The research findings showed that some organisations found psychometric testing effective to be included in their recruitment process, whereas others reported the exclusion of psychometric testing in their recruitment methods and regarded the process as time-consuming and costly. Adding to these findings, Kenku et al. (2026) stated that financial constraints remain a barrier to small and resource-constrained organisation with regard to psychometric testing expenses which may include test licensing fees, training of assessors, professional administration, and purchasing of scoring software.

Sartori et al. (2020) mentioned that, although psychological instruments are regarded as a powerful tool for human resource management, a gap still exists where they are rarely used. This is evident in a survey conducted among 1627 Human Resource Managers, representing large organisations in the US, and the results showed that only 29% of them use psychometric instruments (Sartori et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in a study on the effectiveness of psychometric testing in the recruitment process, conducted by Memon et al. (2018), the research findings revealed that, even though some organisations are aware of the effectiveness of psychometric testing in recruitment, they utilised psychometric testing solely for new incumbents and believe that they can easily judge the personality and capability of other candidates through reference checks with either their former or current manager. However, this approach, according to Hendricks et al. (2019), tends to provide questionable reliability on the information provided, because candidates can provide references from those who would only comment positively about them.

Psychometric Testing in the Workplace

Nzimande et al. (2025) stated that psychometric testing has become an important method of selection within the public sector due to its potential to assess the individuals' intellectual capabilities, personality traits and job-related skills. Psychometric testing in the workplace is used for various purposes. Authors such as Baron et al. (2020), Foxcroft and Modack (2018), Kenku et al. (2026), Moerdyk (2022), and Reuben and Eremie (2020) are in agreement that in the employment setting, psychometric instruments are used for personnel selection, and performance management. Whereas Cohen et al. (2021) and Hernández et al. (2020) highlighted that psychometric instruments in the workplace are used for hiring and promotional purposes. In support of these authors, Memon et al. (2018) added that various psychometric instruments are developed to assess an individual's analytical skills, personality traits, intellectual capability, and other inherent job characteristics that are related to the job. Such inherent related job characteristic can be for example integrity. Collings et al. (2019) and Příhodová et al. (2021) highlighted that integrity tests are proven valuable and valid instruments to assess counterproductive work behaviours such as theft, fraud, and absences.

Kenku et al. (2026) highlighted that besides for recruitment purposes, psychometric instruments are capable to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs of an employee thereby providing the employer with valuable information for training, career development and succession planning for the employee.

Psychometric testing appears to be useful for various purposes in the workplace, it provides the industry with valuable data that can be supplemented with other personal information gathered about an individual to make an employment decision that would be beneficial to both the employee and the employer.

Strategic Use of Psychometric Testing for Employment Purposes

Many organisations, including the public sector, are faced with employment risk, whereby, according to Ye (2022), recruiters only rely on their subjective preferences during the employee

selection process. Ye (2022) urged that using scientific methods, such as data analysis tools and personality tests during the selection process, can provide objective decision-making.

Magro and Vella (2020, p. 80) advised that, “for psychometric testing to be used appropriately, they should serve as an extra tool that aids in the decision-making process; whereby, they help to confirm or challenge the interviewers’ perceptions of candidates which may be formed during the interview”.

In the process of recruitment and selection of employees, psychometric testing becomes an efficient exercise that saves the organisation time and revenue, by ensuring that the right candidates are hired. Sartori et al. (2020) mentioned that psychometric testing is key to ensuring that the organisation makes informed decisions, based on the inherent requirements of the job, regarding, among others, personnel selection. It is for this reason that many organisations are reliant on psychometric testing results to make recommendations on employment decisions (Caska, 2019; Magro & Vella, 2020; Memon et al., 2018).

Sartori et al. (2020) mentioned that, when it comes to personnel selection, unstructured interviews are still the most common tool used to make hiring decisions, despite the abounding evidence of their lower validity and reliability compared to structured and standardised instruments. The utilisation of unstructured tools is evident in the study conducted by Bazana and Reddy (2021), during the appointment process of the former South African Public Protector, Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane. The study aimed to “critically examine the process of recruiting and selecting a Public Protector in South Africa through the framework of professional HR practices” (Bazana & Reddy, 2021, p.3).

Bazana and Reddy (2021, p.2) stated that the Public Protector is a valuable institution in protecting the public and its mandate is “to monitor the conduct of state officials and agencies with the main aim of ensuring an effective and ethical public service”. Post the appointment of Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane, various structures within the government questioned the compatibility of the Public Protector with her responsibilities. Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane was

regarded as incompetent, lacking knowledge of her duties and the scope of the powers of the Public Protector and lacking a basic understanding of the Constitution (Bazana & Reddy, 2021). Section 193 of the Constitution and Section 1 of the Public Protector Act highlighted that the Public Protector position should be occupied by a 'fit and proper' person (Bazana & Reddy, 2021). The principle of 'fit and proper person'; therefore, "served as a warranty to the public that the person occupying such a sensitive post would act ethically, show integrity, reliability and honesty" (Bazana & Reddy, 2021, p.9). Of importance to note is that Bazana and Reddy (2021) reported that these attributes cannot be fairly attained without the utilisation of relevant assessment methods.

In the study, Bazana and Reddy (2021) noted that the selected recruitment committee did not have a correct guideline as to how they would assess these attributes. The committee used interviews to screen individuals on attributes, such as honesty, integrity and reliability (Bazana & Reddy, 2021). Bazana and Reddy (2021) criticised that the interview process cannot be the only tool used to assess behavioural characteristics like integrity, honesty and reliability. Evidenced in the minutes and recordings was that there were no standardised interview questions; therefore, the interview process of each candidate was different (Bazana & Reddy, 2021). However, Sartori et al. (2020) highlighted that, despite their lower validity and reliability, unstructured interviews are still mostly preferable for making hiring decisions.

From this study by Bazana and Reddy (2021), it is evident that the utilisation of unstructured and irrelevant tools to assess job fit, results in job misfit, due to the inability to make an objective judgement and informed employment decisions. Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane was appointed as the Public Protector in 2016, and, due to criticism of her incompetence, she did not complete her term of office. She was suspended from her duties in 2022 (Newsroom, 2022). Bazana and Reddy (2021) stated that, the utilisation of a scientific recruitment and selection process carried out by relevant recruitment professionals, would have enabled the country to appoint a "fit and proper" person to fill the position of Public Protector. Such a scientific process should include the

use of psychometric instruments, since they are regarded as well-researched and objective tools to evaluate and assess the overall suitability of the candidate for the required job (Memon et al., 2018). In support of this, Kenku et al. (2026) mentioned that the traditional recruitment methods, such as interviews and resumes, are subjective in nature and are likely to be biased, whereas psychometric testing provide objective information about an individual to assist the human resource management professional to make informed and fair recruitment and selection decisions thereby reducing the risk of poor hire.

Furthermore, to ensure continuous and professional utilisation of psychometric tests, Memon et al. (2018, p.298) stated that in Pakistan many organisations have outsourced their psychometric testing due to lack of capability within the organisations to implement and administer psychometric testing within organisations. In South Africa, companies such as Psychometric Testing and Evaluation Services, Jopie van Rooyen (JVR) Psychometrics, BIOS South Africa, and SHL South Africa can provide effective psychometric assessment services to organisations in need of such services. Furthermore, many human resource recruitment agencies in South Africa have included in their package of services psychometric assessment services, which can be provided to their clients when needed. South Africa, like other countries such as Pakistan, has sufficient capacity to ensure that psychometric testing is professionally utilised in its employee appointment process.

Summary

In summary, the focus of this chapter was on the value of psychometric testing. Although having encountered criticism regarding its usefulness, particularly on issues of standardisation and administration, psychometric testing is regarded helpful in recruitment and selection, for promotional purposes and performance appraisal, and in predicting risk behaviours that could be detrimental to organisational goals. The importance of using psychometric testing in recruitment and selection, and the consequences of non-use, were highlighted.

The employee appointment process in the public sector will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Employee Appointment Process in the Public Sector

Introduction

The employee appointment process refers to the recruitment and selection procedures carried out by the human resource department of an organisation, to attract potential and suitable candidates to fill a vacancy. These procedures, according to Rotimi and Folorunso (2018), involve identifying, attracting, and retaining people with the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to fulfil organisational responsibilities.

In the public sector, human resource management, particularly on issues of recruitment and selection, is a joint effort regulated by the Office of the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission was established in 1996, and its constitutional mandate, amongst others, is to issue directives to the Public Service concerning personnel recruitment (Public Service Commission, 2012). In accomplishing this mandate, the Public Service Commission developed a Toolkit on Recruitment and Selection, and this toolkit was disseminated to the public service sector through the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The Department of Public Service and Administration was established in 1996 in terms of the Public Service Act of 1994 (Act No. 103 of 1994). It is one of the 40 national government departments that form the public sector in South Africa. The Department of Public Service and Administration, amongst its other functions, is to change and improve the public service through the establishment of human resource practices and improved technology, which will then result in better service delivery (National Treasury, 2010). All 40 national government departments are therefore, led by the Department of Public Service and Administration in terms of policy management, to improve service delivery (National Treasury, 2010).

Through the guidelines from the toolkit on recruitment and selection received from the Public Service Commission, the Department of Public Service and Administration then developed the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service. This White Paper provides

a policy framework that enables respective government departments to develop, amongst others, human resource management practices and their respective recruitment and selection policies.

Recruitment and Selection

Bakhashwain and Javed (2021), Baron et al. (2020), Collings et al. (2019), Kenku et al. (2026) and Khandelwal and Kumar (2019) regarded recruitment and selection as crucial practices that are directly linked to the success and growth of the organisation. It is for this reason that Botutihe et al. (2021) warned that, if this process is not correctly carried out, it will negatively influence company goals. Rotimi and Folorunso (2018) highlighted that studies have shown that poor human resource recruitment and selection practices were among the factors that hindered organisational performance. Nahayo (2019) defined organisational performance as a measure of the actual output or results based on the intended goals and objectives of the organisation.

Nahayo (2019) warned that, without the right staff selected using the right methods, organisations will not operate successfully. It is therefore important, according to Eva (2018), that organisations should put in place good recruitment and selection strategies, and carefully follow them, to ensure that the most suitable candidate is appointed. Good recruitment and selection strategies refer to effective actions, carried out by the human resource department of the organisation, to ensure that the organisation possesses employees with the needed attributes, knowledge and skills.

Bernocchi (2018) stated that, employment in the public sector is guided by rules and regulations to prevent abuse and corruption. Amongst other legislative guidelines in South Africa, is the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Act No.55 of 1998). This Act aims to “achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment” (Government Gazette, 1998).

The first step in achieving equity in the workplace, thereby promoting equality and fairness in employment, is through the implementation of effective recruitment and selection processes.

The role of the public sector is to ensure quality service to the citizens. The quality of service provided to the citizens will therefore determine whether such a public service entity does indeed

meet its intended goals and objectives. Because organisational performance is dependent on its employees, quality employees will result in good organisational performance. Baron et al. (2018) mentioned that the quality of employees is dependent on the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment and selection process.

Bernocchi (2018) states that recruiting qualified personnel is a priority at all levels of government. This is supported by Mchunu (2019), who highlighted that public sector recruitment is a very important aspect of governance and service delivery. It is therefore empirical that the public sector employs effective recruitment and selection practices that, according to Mchunu (2019), will ensure that the government attracts and employs suitable candidates that will enable them to meet service delivery objectives across the local, provincial and national spheres of government.

Person–Organisational Fit

The statistical release reported that the official unemployment rate in South Africa stood at 29.1% in 2019 (Statistics of South Africa, 2020), 35.3% in 2021 (Statistics of South Africa, 2022) and 31.4% in 2025 and 32.7 in quarter one of 2026 (Statistics of South Africa, 2026). This unemployment rate is a challenge for both employers and job seekers. Eva (2018) alluded that not only the job seekers are struggling to get suitable jobs, but also organisations are striving to conduct effective recruitment and selection activities, to place and retain highly qualified employees in suitable positions.

Rotimi and Folorunso (2018) mentioned that the benefits of positive person–organisation fit lead to organisational efficiency and high productivity, whereas job mismatch leads to poor job output and business failure. This job misfit is regarded by William and Perumal (2021) as a misfit and further added that this condition is undesirable and it negatively affect the growth of the organisation. In order to avoid employee misfit, which will then have a negative impact on organisational goals, organisations need to develop and adopt a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy that includes psychometric testing. In support of this, Kenku et al. (2026)

highlighted that psychometric instruments are capable to assess the values, work ethics and motivational drives of new candidates to ensure their alignment with organisational goals leading to organisational effectiveness.

Ansoglenang (2020, p.12) reported that “recruitment and selection remain one of the oldest human resource management functions and serve as the most important managerial tool in attracting qualified and talented employees”. Williamson and Perumal (2021) argued that it is therefore due time that job fit should be embraced as one of the critical criteria in the recruitment and selection of new employees.

South African citizens are dependent on public services to receive critical services such as social services, health care and law enforcement (Mhlanga et al., 2019). It is for this reason that Anwar and Abdullah (2021) expressed that the public service should be accessible to all who are fully dependent on these services. The accessibility of the public service starts with the recruitment and selection process to appoint a suitable candidate, who will enable such accessibility to the public. It is, therefore, vital, according to Mdletye (2018), that the employee selection process be properly carried out to ensure person-work fit. Such correct processing should involve the utilisation of various tools, to assess all the inherent job requirements, such as job knowledge, ability, aptitude, performance and personality.

According to Ye (2022), choosing the right individual can be challenging for the company, due to the conflict of values between employees and the organisation. Ye (2022) further mentioned that, during the hiring process, many recruiters tend to focus on professional skills and ignore attitudes and personalities. Particularly in the public sector, only interviews and background checks are currently used to select the best candidate for the job, whereas important attributes, such as abilities, personality, aptitude, potential and performance, are disregarded as less crucial for that position. Ye (2022) highlighted that this approach might lead to increased management costs after employment, if the applicant handles the contradictory values of the organisation, because attitudes and behaviours are difficult to change. Baron et al. (2018) concluded that organisations

should use care when recruiting new employees and ensure that they employ candidates who are compatible with the organisation's objectives and possess the necessary qualifications to achieve those objectives.

Ye (2022) concluded that, no matter how highly qualified employees may be, they may not be able to make a meaningful contribution if they are placed in an inappropriate environment. A comprehensive selection tool should, therefore, be able to assess all the inherent job requirements and differentiate between candidates who fit both the profile of the job and organisational values, and those that do not fit.

Human Capital

Human resources are the core resources for the success, sustainability and growth of every organisation. Nahayo (2019) reported that, even though the organisation can have the latest technology and the best physical resources, its most important resources remain human capital. Employees are valuable assets of the organisation, because they determine its performance (Khandelwal & Kumar, 2019; Oaya et al., 2017). It is, therefore, crucial that organisations ensure that the right candidates are recruited, through an effective employee appointment process.

Nahayo (2019) conducted a study on the analysis of effective recruitment towards organisational performance and competitiveness in Rwanda. The study aimed to determine whether the recruitment process is indeed a contributing factor to poor organisational performance and competitiveness. Recruitment officers were the sample for the study, and the correctional test was used to assess the interconnection between effective recruitment and organisational performance. From the study, a positive correlation between effective recruitment and organisational performance was noted whereby ninety-five percent (95%) of participants regarded organisational performance and competitiveness as the main fruit of effective recruitment (Nahayo, 2019). Another finding was that all participants reported that they are well conversant with the recruitment process, but, because some processes are not implemented during

recruitment, the results are poor performance and incompetence of employees (Nahayo, 2019). Incompetent employees will lead to poor service delivery, thus poor organisational performance. Memon et al. (2018) further stated that the fact that employees are regarded as the main resources of every company's success, their experience, qualities, educational background, attitudes, behaviours and personalities are vital to goal achievement. Such employee attributes, behaviour and personality cannot be assessed superficially through, for instance, observation or interviewing, but need to be assessed intensely through the utilisation of proper tools. Risavy et al. (2019) reported that it is in the best interest of the organisation to utilise scientific selection techniques, to be able to employ the right candidate to facilitate organisational success.

Quality Service

Public sector services are vital across the globe and include, amongst others, human services such as health, social care and education (Osborne, 2021). Osborne (2021) further highlighted that the successful delivery of services to the public can only be enhanced when public services are understood as “services” and not as “products”. Despite being private or public, the main aim of service providers is to add value to their users. It is, therefore, empirical that such services are of good quality, to ensure the satisfaction of the users.

Mohamad et al. (2021) mentioned that the definition of quality service is dependent on how the customers feel that their service needs were met by an organization. From the human resource management perspective, quality service is determined through the professional conduct, attitude, behaviour and sense of responsibility of the person providing such services (Pantih et al., 2021).

Since the government is a crucial service provider to its citizens, it is required that public administrators adopt new recruitment and selection strategies, to attract the best pool of candidates, who will enable governments to provide services effectively and efficiently to the public (Bernocchi, 2018). This is supported by Mohamad et al. (2021), who stated that human resource management is one of the aspects that support organisational transformation toward

better performance. The quality of service that the organisation renders is one of the measures of determining organisational performance. Such quality of service is rendered by human resources. To ensure better performance, organisations should continuously review, amongst others, their human resource management practices, to ensure effective and efficient service delivery by employees. This effective and efficient service delivery needs a highly skilled workforce (Nahayo, 2019). Human resource specialists must perform effective human resource management practices to ensure effective service delivery to consumers (Mohamad et al., 2021).

Summary

In summary, the focus of this chapter was on providing insight into the employee appointment process in the public sector, with a particular focus on various stakeholders that direct the process, from the legislative level to the implementation phase. The importance of adopting a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy that includes psychometric testing during the hiring process was highlighted. Suitable appointment to the job leads to optimal employee and organisational performance, resulting in good quality service delivery. The research design that was followed is explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design for the study, which entails the paradigm perspective that supports the methodology chosen for this research, the research approach, research strategy and research method utilised. The sampling strategy, data collection method and trustworthiness of the data collected are explained. A discussion on ethical considerations concludes the chapter.

The Paradigm Perspective

Creswell (2023) stated that there are four world views (i.e., paradigms) used in research, namely:

- i. Postpositivist (focuses on the scientific method of doing research and focuses on the following elements: determination, reduction, empirical observation and measurement, and theory verification)
- ii. Constructivist (focuses on the social construction of reality and focuses on the following elements: understanding, multiple participants meanings, social and historical construction, and theory generation)
- iii. Transformative (is change oriented and focuses on the following elements to change the world for the better: political, power and justice, and collaboration)
- iv. Pragmatic (focus on what works to resolve a problem and focuses on the following elements: consequences of actions, problem centred, pluralistic, and real-world practice oriented)

This research was approached from an interpretive perspective within the constructivist paradigm. According to the constructivist viewpoint, individuals develop their own views and opinions from their social and historical experiences (Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2025). Furthermore, the researcher would use open-ended questions to allow participants to openly share their views (Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2025). Through this paradigm, the researcher was able to

explore participants' views and concerns about the use of psychometric testing during the employee appointment process.

Further support of this constructivist paradigm is its ontology, which, according to Kekeya (2019, p. 26), is defined as “reality or truth that exists”. De Sordi (2024) added that the constructivist paradigm explores new realities of society, from people who experience or have experienced the phenomena under study. The realities that exist about the study are that psychological assessments are used less in the employee appointment process in the public sector. Due to its historical introduction in South Africa, the use of psychometric instruments, particularly in the public sector, is politically challenging. Human resource practitioners hold different views and opinions (realities and truths) based on their knowledge and experiences about the use of psychometric instruments.

In addition, the epistemology of the constructivist paradigm is defined by Kekeya (2019, p. 26) as “the construction or generation of knowledge from reality or truth”. This construction of knowledge was based on personal contributions from participants' experiences gathered through interviews.

Research Approach

The study followed a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach was found relevant to the study due to its natural setting which allows the researcher to collect research data directly from participants (Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2025). Furthermore, the qualitative research approach was found relevant to the study, because it is exploratory and will create a platform where participants will freely voice their opinions, perceptions and views on the use of psychometric testing for recruitment and selection purposes.

The research being qualitative, one-on-one, in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted. This qualitative research technique allowed the researcher to explore, in detail, the perceptions of participants concerning the phenomena under study. According to Creswell and Poth (2025), the interview method allows direct conversation with participants and provide the researcher with control over the line of questioning.

Research Strategy

Permission

The public sector, referred to as Government, is divided into three spheres, namely the national government, provincial government and local government. All these spheres of government have both exclusive and concurrent responsibilities, such as policy development and application, as well as performance management (National Treasury, 2005).

National Treasury (2005) further stipulates that the main function of the national government, amongst others, is to formulate policy and mentor its overall implementation by the provincial government.

The National Government (2020) stipulates that the national government comprises the following national departments:

“1. Civilian Secretariat for Police Services; 2. Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development; 3. Department of Basic Education; 4. Department of Communications and Digital Technology; 5. Department of Cooperative Governance; 6. Department of Correctional Services; 7. Department of Defence; 8. Department of Employment and Labour; 9. Department of Environment, Forestry, and Fisheries; 10. Department of Health; 11. Department of Higher Education and Training; 12. Department of Home Affairs; 13. Department of Human Settlement; 14. Department of International Relations and Cooperation; 15. Department of Justice and Constitutional Development; 16. Department of Military Veterans; 17. Department of Mineral Resources and Energy; 18. Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation; 19. Department of Public Enterprise; 20. Department of Public Service and Administration; 21. Department of Public Works and Infrastructure; 22. Department of Science and Innovation; 23. Department of Small Business Development; 24. Department of Social Development; 25. Department of Sports, Arts and Culture; 26. Department of Tourism; 27. Department of Trade, Industry and Competition; 28. Department of Traditional Affairs; 29. Department of Transport; 30.

Department of Water and Sanitation; 31. Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability; 32. Government Communication and Information System; 33. Independent Police Investigative Directorate; 34. National School of Governance; 35. National Treasury; 36. Office of the Chief Justice; 37. South African Police Services; 38. South African Revenue Services; 39. State Security Agency; 40. Statistics South Africa”.

All these national departments receive guidelines on human resource management practices from the Office of the Public Service Commission, in the form of a toolkit on recruitment and selection. This toolkit was issued to the Department of Public Service and Administration, which then developed a White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service. It is through this White Paper that directives on recruitment and selection from the Office of the Public Service Commission reach the national departments.

Based on this elaboration on how the public sector functions on issues of human resource management in the public sector, the Department of the Public Service and Administration was identified as the gatekeeper, due to its mandatory purpose, which, amongst others, is to issue to the Public Service directives concerning human resource management practices.

According to the UNISA policy on research ethics, an agreement needs to be reached between UNISA and the collaborating institution before the research proposal is submitted to the Ethics Review Committee for approval. Therefore, an application for permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Director-General: Department of Public Service and Administration.

Post permission granted by the Department of Public Service and Administration, the researcher then submitted the relevant documentation to the appropriate UNISA Ethics Review Committee to obtain ethical clearance to conduct the study.

Sampling

The study being qualitative in nature, purposeful sampling was used. Purpose sampling means that the researcher selects participants that will best describe the problem or phenomena under study (Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2025). This sampling method enabled the researcher to

narrow the specifications concerning the selection of participants. Furthermore, the non-probability sampling strategy was applied which according to Campbell et al. (2019), is regarded as a reliable sampling technique to offer quick and detailed results for studies on views and perceptions of research participants. In addition, non-probability samples are usually smaller numbers used to explore or analyse, in-depth, a specific social issue or topic (Campbell et al. 2019). This strategy was found suitable for the research, because no potential participants were coerced or influenced in any way to participate in the research, but were allowed to participate voluntarily. The study is about the perception of human resource managers on the use of psychometric instruments for employment appointment purposes; therefore, heads of the recruitment and selection subsection within the human resource management section of each respective national department formed the research sample. These participants were found to be relevant to the study, because the research subject falls within their scope of work and they would, therefore, be in a better position to engage truthfully for the benefit of the research. Furthermore, it was learned from the literature review that national departments have amongst its functions formulated their policies under the guidelines of the Department of Public Service and Administration, as directed by the Office of the Public Service Commission; hence, they are in a better position to influence the Office of the Public Service Commission to revisit and review the toolkit on recruitment and selection in the Public Service.

There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry (Yin, 2016). The public sector comprises 40 national departments and, therefore, all 40 recruitment and selection section managers formed the population of this research. The researcher wished to start with a selection of 20 participants until saturation was reached.

The goal of the researcher was to interview one participant from each national department; but, because participation is voluntary, only a few participants were reached. Based on the letter from the Department of Public Service and Administration, granting the researcher permission to conduct research in the public sector, one of the conditions stipulated in the letter was that the

researcher is responsible for approaching respective national departments and making research arrangements with them. Since the permission letters to respective national government departments need to be addressed to the Director-General of that national department, the researcher had to first send e-mails to each national government department, to establish the correct contact person to receive the request for permission to conduct research in their department.

The researcher sent contact confirmation e-mails to all 40 national departments using the contact information from the website and only 17 responded with either positive confirmation or a change of management details. The researcher then sent e-mails to all 17 national departments that responded to the request for permission to conduct research in their departments. Out of these 17 requests, only 10 national departments responded positively, thereby granting the researcher permission to conduct research in their departments. Responses were received in a letter format and, out of the 10 permission letters received, two (2) of them did not provide the researcher with a direct contact person to further action arrangements for possible participation. Through the office contact numbers provided by these two (2) letters, the researcher was unable to reach potential participants. Therefore, out of the remaining eight (8) permission letters, only eight (8) participants were interviewed, from seven (7) national departments, with two (2) participants volunteering from one (1) national department. The researcher welcomed this additional participant to add to the number of participants. Possible potential participants from the remainder of one (1) national department did not respond to the e-mail sent, following attempts to reach them telephonically.

So, from the above explanation, the sampling journey was as follows:

- Total national departments reached = 40
- Contact persons' confirmation received from national departments = 17
- Permission to conduct research granted = 10
- National departments visited = 7

- Interviews conducted = 8

Trustworthiness of Data Collected

In many cases, qualitative research aims to explore and understand rather than to predict or correlate (as is the case in quantitative research). A model of trustworthiness, which is referred to as qualitative validity, that can be applied to qualitative research to ensure the accuracy and quality of research results is proposed (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). Trustworthiness in qualitative research is ensured by researchers through accurate capturing of participants' information, which serves as qualitative data (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018).

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is ensured through the application of the following trustworthiness types (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018):

General trustworthiness

This type refers to the extent to which the research process and its findings can be regarded as accurate (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). Urban and Van Eeden-Moorefield (2018) mentioned that, for the researcher to satisfy this step, they should try to answer this question: how thorough they were throughout the research process.

This factor was ensured as follows:

- The researcher had a telephone conversation with participants, informing them about the study underway and the relevancy of their participation into the study, and to schedule a interview. The researcher then sent to participants, the participant information sheet which invite the participant into the study, outlining the puporse of the study, their relevancy into the study, their nature of their participation, their right to withdraw from participation at any time without giving reasons, the benefits of their participation into the study, their voluntary resposne to questions, ensuring confidentiality of anonimity in participation, how research data will be stored, confirmation that the study has ethics approval from the institution, and openness to contact the researcher and the supersvisor should the need arise from the participants.

- An informed consent form was also sent to participant via email and was collected from them prior the interview.
- The researcher is an experienced vetting officer, whereby personal interviews are a core mode of data collection and note-taking during the interview process; therefore, a tape recording was not used.
- The researcher is experienced with interview skills, as this is her daily function.
- To ensure the accuracy of data, the researcher typed the interview transcripts as soon as possible and then shared the typed transcripts with participants, via e-mail, to check whether the information was accurately captured.

Credibility

Refers to the extent to which the findings are truly representative of participants' experiences and perceptions (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). Urban and Van Eeden-Moorefield (2018) highlighted that findings should not be influenced by researchers' beliefs, perceptions, previous research or theory.

In achieving this, the researcher ensured that the findings were based purely on participants' experiences and perceptions by referencing participants' comments in the discussion about the research findings.

Transferability

Refers to the extent to which findings from another study can be applied to another population or situation (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). In qualitative research, unlike positivistic research, it is not possible or necessary to demonstrate that research findings are generalisable, because its purpose is to understand and describe phenomena, and a smaller sample is used (Shenton, 2004). However, if researchers want their findings to be transferable, they must provide as much information as possible, so that others will be able to make a reasonable comparison from one context to another (Shenton, 2004). The researcher endeavours

to provide as much information as possible, as described by the data analysis methods, to enable others to understand the phenomenon being researched and to enable them to make such comparisons.

Dependability

Refers to the extent of the consistency of the findings (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). In other words, the extent to which the research, if repeated, using the same methods, same context and same respondents, would yield the same results (Shenton, 2004). Qualitative research focuses on the uniqueness of human beings and is concerned with understanding and explaining phenomena, which, in most cases, take place in situations where there are many variations (Shenton, 2004). To this end, any variability, including the sources thereof, will be fully accounted for, recorded and described (Shenton, 2004). In addition, the data gathering, analysis and interpretation methods must be described in full (Shenton, 2004).

The researcher satisfied this consideration as follows:

- Interview questions were formulated from the research questions, the research aim and motivation, and the research literature.
- Based on the goal of the research, semi – structured interviews were found to be the most effective method of data collection.
- Interviews were conducted individually, in a well-trusted atmosphere, where participants openly shared their views with the researcher.
- The data analysis and interpretation were fully described.

Confirmability

This refers to the extent to which the researcher ensured that the research process and findings remained bias-free throughout (Urban & Van Eeden-Moorefield, 2018). In other words, the extent to which the results completely reflect the experiences and ideas of the participants (Shenton, 2004). To ensure confirmability, the researcher documented each method used, along

with the reason why one method was chosen over another, including the advantages and disadvantages of each one (Shenton, 2004). In addition, the researcher will provide an audit trail that clearly shows how the data will be gathered, analysed and checked, at various stages, for accuracy (Shenton, 2004).

To ensure conformity with this factor, the researcher motivated the choice of method for data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, an audit trail was provided as evidence of how data was collected and analysed.

Summary

This chapter examined the research design applied in the study. A qualitative research approach was found to be the most effective mode of data collection, due to its exploratory nature. The research followed the constructivist paradigm perspective, to explore participants' views and concerns on the use of psychometric testing during the employee selection process. The purposeful, non-probability sampling method was used to narrow the specification of participants. Data was collected through one-on-one in-depth semi – structured interviews with human resource managers of respective national governments. The trustworthiness of the data collected was outlined. The data analysis process will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research design and the method used to collect data from human resource managers on their perceptions about the use of psychometric instruments during the recruitment and selection process in the public sector. This chapter outlines how the data was analysed. Data was analysed using the qualitative content analysis method. This method, according to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), involves an inductive strategy.

Data Analysis Process

Roller and Lavrakas (2015) mentioned that the qualitative content analysis approach analyses data through two phases: firstly, the data generation (which involves coding), followed by data analysis involving categorisation and interpretation of data.

From these two phases, Roller and Lavrakas (2015) identified eight steps that can be followed in qualitative content analysis of the data. The steps are discussed below as follows:

Phase 1: Data Generation (Coding)

This phase involves the following five steps in qualitative content analysis (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015):

Step 1 - Absorb content. In this step, the researcher will gain an understanding of the content of the data, that is, will get a sense of the 'whole picture' (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The researcher thoroughly read and reread the written qualitative data to comprehend the data content.

Step 2 - Determine the unit of analysis. Roller and Lavrakas (2015) define the unit of analysis as those portions of the content that will be used to develop the codes. Roller and Lavrakas (2015) advised that the researcher should, as far as possible, use a broader and more contextually based unit of analysis approach, rather than a narrow-focused one. This

approach, according to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), will provide a researcher with content-related units that can be analysed across all sampled content.

Step 3 - Develop unique codes. Codes are tags used by researchers to summarise a large amount of written information into a manageable and analysable format (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Roller and Lavrakas (2015) stipulate that identified codes should be independent from one another, be recorded in the codebook, each with a unique name or label, definition and verbatim example from the data. Of importance is the flexibility of the code development process in qualitative content analysis, where new codes can suffice and existing ones revised as the researcher gains a new understanding of the process (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Step 4 - Conduct preliminary coding. This step involves testing the viability of the identified proposed codes (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The exercise is normally carried out by two or more coders, who will independently code the subset of the content and then meet to compare, discuss and resolve any discrepancies (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). This exercise benefits the researcher by updating the codebook with the revised or additional codes (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Step 5 - Code the content. In this step, the researcher assigned codes to the entire set of content. During this period, according to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), the researcher should regularly meet with the supervisor to learn, discuss and resolve any unforeseen issues in the coding process that are not related to the identified codes.

Once the coding process is done, the research will then continue with content analysis to the next phase. This phase involves categorisation and interpretation of data, comprised of the three remainder steps that can be followed in qualitative content analysis of the data (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Phase 2: Data analysis (Categorisation/ Interpretation)

Step 6 - Identify categories across codes. In this step, the researcher should identify constructs that have the same meaning across codes and group such codes together (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Step 7 - Identifying themes or patterns across categories. In this step, the researcher should look across the codes that define each category and across all categories, to differentiate themes or patterns in the data (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Step 8: Draw interpretations and implications from the data. According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), in this stage, the researcher should have already begun to structure their interpretations of the data. While the researcher is building up the interpretations and implications from the data, Roller and Lavrakas (2015) mentioned that the researcher should verify these interpretations and implications through the triangulation method. This method involves comparing the interpretations and implications drawn by other researchers on the same phenomena (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The researcher compared the interpretations and implications made by other researchers, on the same research topic and then drew up her own interpretations and implications based on the data and conclusions.

Following all these steps to inductively analyse the data collected, the researcher utilised the software tool named ATLAS.ti. Since this is the researcher's first experience doing the data analysis exercise, the researcher found this Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) user-friendly and timesaving. Additionally, the software is offered free of charge to all UNISA-registered students, as well as training on how to use the software.

The researcher downloaded the software from the link provided by the institution and then created a project, uploaded typed interview transcripts, created codes, grouped codes, created themes and, thereafter, utilised the analysis tools from the software to further analyse the data, in preparation for the interpretation and findings of the study.

Following the data analysis process recommended by Roller and Lavrakas (2015), the analysis of the data, with the help of ATLAS.ti, is described next.

Data Generation (Coding). During data collection, qualitative research questions were asked to participants during the interviews. According to Barogga and Matanguihan (2022), qualitative research questions are developed based on the goals of the study. Qualitative research questions can, therefore; be contextual – to identify and describe existing conditions; descriptive – to describe a phenomenon; evaluative – to assess the effectiveness of existing methods, protocols, theories, or procedures; explanatory – to examine a phenomenon or analyse the reasons or relationships between subjects or phenomena; exploratory – to focus on unknown aspects of a particular topic; generative – to provide new ideas for the development of theories and actions; ideological – to advance specific ideologies of a position; ethnographic – to become working guidelines built from an existing body of literature; phenomenological – which are built from no specific literature or a typology of questions; grounded theory – towards generating a theory of some process; or qualitative case – to assess a description of the case and the emerging themes (Barogga & Matanguihan, 2022).

Based on the specific aim of the study, which is to understand the perceptions of human resource managers in the public sector on the use of psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process, their concerns and their challenges in this regard, the evaluative research questioning approach was adopted.

Barogga and Matanguihan (2022) stated that, in qualitative studies, central research questions are posed, followed by several sub-questions. The following empirical research questions were, therefore, regarded as the central research questions, and they served as a guide to formulate the sub-questions:

1. What does the current recruitment and selection method used by the public sector entail?

2. What are the reasons why psychometric instruments are not integrated into the employment selection process in the public sector?

3. What are the views or opinions of human resource managers about the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process?

The sub-questions were then developed, compiled in a questionnaire format and are attached as annexure 1. This questionnaire was used to collect research data.

In preparation for this data generation phase, the researcher then transcribed handwritten notes from the interviews into typed interview transcripts and saved them in a folder for easy access.

To ensure confidentiality of participants, transcripts were anonymously labelled, from Participant 1 to 8. The researcher then read and reread the interview transcripts to gain more insight and understanding of the content of the research data.

Research data collected from sub-questions developed is outlined as follows to address the empirical research questions:

Question 1: Kindly take me through the steps of the employee appointment process that the organisation undertakes, from recruitment to the final appointment of the suitable candidate.

This question was used to build rapport with participants and as an introduction to the interview. In response to this question, the participants reported that they would advertise the position in the DPSA circular, then compile a shortlist and, subsequently, conduct interviews. Participants indicated that this process is in line with the directives of the DPSA.

Question 2: Does the organisation follow the same employee appointment process for all positions? YES or NO

2.1. If YES, are or is there particular reason(s) as to why the same process is followed for all positions?

2.2. If NO, for which positions does the employee appointment process differ, and what steps are then followed during the employee appointment of these positions?

Out of all 8 participants, 7 participants indicated that the employee appointment process is not the same for all positions in the public sector. To be specific, participants mentioned that the recruitment process for senior management service (SMS) applicants differs. From participants' responses, it was gathered that technical tests and competency assessments appear to be additional tools that are applied during the employee appointment process for senior management service candidates.

Responses about each of these tools are discussed next.

Technical Test

Participant 2 mentioned that "it is compulsory for senior management service candidates to go through the technical test during the interview process". However, both Participants 3 and 5 stated that after the interviews, candidates are taken through the technical assessment exercise. On the contrary, Participant 6 differed in that a technical assessment is done before the interviews.

Participant 8 narrated that "unless if practical technical assessments are done, then they would be useful to assess the candidate's competency to do the job."

Competency Assessment

Competency Assessment was highlighted as an additional tool applied during the employee appointment process for senior management service candidates. According to the Department of Public Service and Administration (2003), the competency framework aims to assess the skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of potential senior management candidates, to ensure that the appointed candidate can function proficiently at the strategic level. This tool was mentioned by all the Participants, except Participant 8. However, Participants 1 and 7 stated that the application of this tool appears to be just a compliance matter. Participant 1 further elaborated that "competency assessment results are not integrated in the overall decision-making of appointing the potential candidate in senior management service positions". Additionally, both Participants 2 and 7 mentioned that this tool is only used after the appointment decision has been made.

The reasons for non-consideration of competency assessment results were highlighted by various participants. Participants 1 and 2 speculated that this non-consideration of competency assessment results could be due to a lack of knowledge on how to analyse and use the results. However, Participant 7 highlighted that the competency assessment “is only a compliance issue, due to the history of the use of psychometric instruments to belittle blacks”.

Participant 1 highlighted that disregarding the ‘red flags’ from the competency assessment results, might cost the organisation in the future. Participant 6 added that “the tool is not taken seriously, its results are not implemented as part of the decision-making to appoint the right senior manager into the position”.

Participant 1 indicated that competency assessment is effective in providing the candidates' personality traits and less effective in identifying the candidates' developmental gaps. On the contrary, Participant 2 stated that competency assessment results are used for developmental purposes.

Question 3: In your own understanding, what is a psychometric instrument and what do you think psychometric instruments are used for OR for what purpose do you think psychometric instruments are used for?

All 8 participants defined a psychometric test based on its purpose. Participants 1, 5 and 8 commonly defined a psychometric instrument as a tool used to assess an individual's personality traits and to make hiring decisions. According to Participants 2 and 4, a psychometric instrument is a device used to assess an individual's competencies. Participant 8 further defined a psychometric instrument as a tool that is “used to evaluate the candidate's skills and intelligence”.

Question 4: In your own opinion, do you think psychometric instruments are effective tools to be utilised during the employee appointment process? Motivate your answer.

Participant 1 commented on the effectiveness of psychometric instruments, based on their scientific character, noting that they “cannot be manipulated, and their results are accurate, consistent, reliable, valid and they are standard to all”.

Participants 3 and 6 remarked that psychometric instruments are effective tools to assess elements that cannot be observed.

Participants 4 and 5 mentioned that psychometric instruments “assist to ensure that the right candidates, who are willing to serve, are appointed”.

Both Participants 5 and 6 regarded the psychometric instruments as effective in saving the employer time, by making the right hiring decisions.

Question 5: In your own opinion, do you think it is fair to utilise psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the Public Service? Motivate your answer.

A positive view on the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the public sector was indicated by Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. However, according to Participants 5, 6 and 7, the fair application of such testing is dependent on the ethical application of the instrument. Job-specific application of the instrument was highlighted by Participants 5 and 7; whereas Participant 6 indicated that psychometric instruments must not discriminate.

Cultural diversity of test takers was therefore another ethical issue highlighted by Participant 3, Participant 5, and Participant 6.

Participant 5 highlighted that “ethics needs to be applied when using the instruments”.

Contrary to the fair use of the psychometric instrument in the employee appointment process, Participants 2 and 8 held that it is not fair to utilise such instruments. Participant 2 voiced “lack of exposure to the instruments”, whereas Participant 8 pointed out the issue of non-consideration of its results in hiring decisions.

Question 6: Does the organisation use psychometric instruments in its employee selection process? YES or NO.

6.1. If YES, are these tools utilised during the employee appointment process of all positions? YES or NO.

6.1.1. If YES, do you have any concern with the manner in which these psychometric instruments are used in the organisation? YES OR NO.

6.1.1.1. If YES, what are those concerns that you have regarding the manner in which your organisation use psychometric instruments and, in your own opinion, what do you think can or should the organisation do to minimise your concerns?

6.1.2. If NO, for which level positions does the organisation utilise psychometric instruments; and for which level position does the organisation not utilise psychometric instruments?

6.1.2.1. In your own opinion, do you think the organisation needs to utilise psychometric instruments for all positions? Motivate your answer.

6.2. If NO, are there particular challenges that the organisation is experiencing or facing to implement the use of psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process? YES or NO.

6.2.1. If YES, what are those challenges?

6.2.2. What steps or actions did the organisation took to deal with the mentioned challenges?

6.2.2. If NO, In your own opinion, what do you think are or could be reason(s) why psychometric instruments are not utilised in the employee appointment process of the organisation?

In response to this aspect, it is important to note that some participants refer to competency assessments instead of psychometric instruments.

Six (6) participants, comprising of Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8, indicated that their specific employer does not use psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process. The reasons provided for this non-use were highlighted by the respective participants. Participants 7 and 8 mentioned that competency assessments are mainly perceived as costly, because they are done through a service provider.

Participant 3 mentioned utilisation of service providers to conduct psychometric testing, however, the issue of non-commonality across departments has discouraged the employer from implementing these tools in its employee appointment process.

Participant 1 also indicated that their employer does not use psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process, because of the non-consideration of competency assessment results in the selection and recruitment process of senior management service candidates.

Participant 4 highlighted that, because identified developmental gaps cannot be addressed through training interventions due to non-approval of training requests by management, psychometric tests are, therefore, not used in the employee appointment process.

Participant 5 reported that the non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process by lower-level personnel has resulted in the non-use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process for all positions in their organisation.

Few participants highlighted challenges that their respective employers are experiencing in implementing the psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process. In this regard, Participant 1 stated that “the perception that tests are developed in European countries results in them not being trusted”. Similarly, Participants 1 and 2 responded that the “historic background makes the public sector to not have an appetite” to include psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process.

Furthermore, Participant 5 reported that psychometric instruments “are perceived as a threat by unions”.

According to Participant 7, the absence of a “department to monitor the proper use of the competency assessment for senior management positions” is a challenge.

Participant 8 stated that,

“the organisation does not use psychometric instruments in its employee selection process, because, sometimes, the organisation does not see a need to conduct such

competency assessment for recruitment purposes. The budget constraints can be another factor, since an external service provider is used to do those competency assessments”.

In attempting to address the issue of the non-consideration of competency assessment results in the employee appointment process of senior management service candidates, respective participants suggested various measures that could be considered, and they are outlined below:

- Participant 1 mentioned that senior management service members must be provided with training on how to interpret the competency assessment results.
- Participant 2 suggested outsourcing the senior management service appointment process, to ensure that the process is properly adhered to.
- Participant 6 highlighted that in-house assessors will ensure familiarity with the tool and implementation of its results.
- Participant 7 indicated a need to establish an in-house department “to monitor the use of competency assessment for management appointments” and to make follow-ups on the effectiveness of the suggested intervention strategies to address identified developmental gaps.

Question 7: What is your general view on the use of psychometric instruments for employee appointment process in South Africa?

According to Participant 1, “psychometric instruments are very good at minimising biasness in recruitment; they are standard to all; and they are fair and consistent”.

Participant 2 stated that the “private sector does rely on psychometric instruments, because they are profit-driven”.

Participant 3 mentioned that “the use of psychometric instruments in our country needs to consider the diverse culture and school background of those taking the tests”.

According to Participant 4, “psychometric instruments are very important, depending on the nature of the job. Personality is important in jobs such as, for example, a receptionist; therefore, psychometric assessments should assess the job-relevant competencies”.

Participant 5 is of the view that “psychometric instruments need to be quite clear, simplistic, practical, and service-related to ensure that they bring the right and ethical people into government.”

Participant 6 alluded that

“Psychometric instruments must be used during the recruitment process, because they make sense to appoint the right candidate to avoid appointing a burden into the department, where then that particular person needs to be sent to training and also to the labour section due to incompetency. Psychometric instruments can tell you the wellbeing of a person, according to the output of the results of the assessment. People can overtalk during the interview and, when they are underperforming, it is difficult to dismiss them. Assessment is, therefore, a must for all levels.”

Participant 7 highlighted that “if used well, psychometric instruments will contribute positively to the workplace, to prevent poor appointments, poor performance of employees and employers, thus resulting in good service delivery”.

Participant 8 devalued psychometric instruments and indicated that “previously, the psychometric tests were never used to appoint people and people were placed correctly, without them. The performance development plan is sufficient to identify and address the skills gaps observed from the employee’s performance.”

Question 8: Do you think South Africa has the capacity to utilise psychometric instruments developed in the country? Motivate your answer.

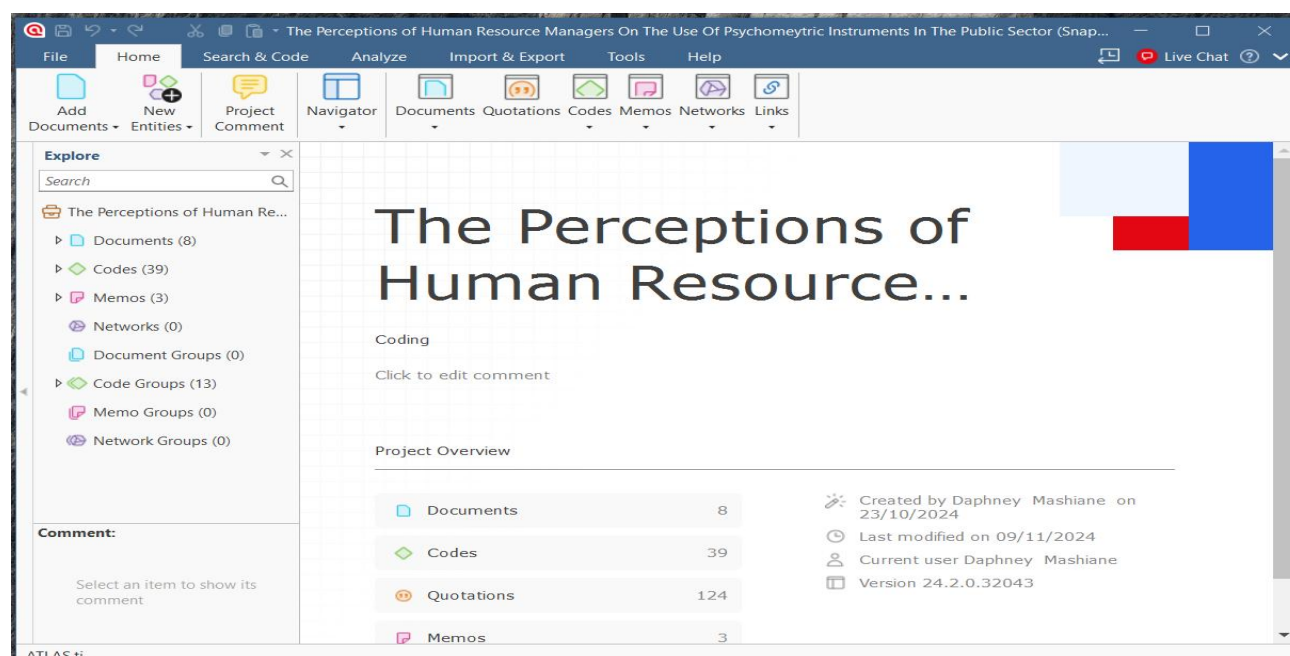
Participants 3, 4 and 6 stated that the country is not yet capable of developing its own psychometric instruments.

On the contrary, Participant 7 mentioned that South Africa can develop its own psychometric instruments through benchmarking, adopting, and modifying tests from other countries to suit the South African population.

Coding was then done through the utilisation of the ATLAS.ti software. Figure 6.1 illustrates how the software was utilised to analyse the research data.

Figure 6.1

Screenshot of Research Project created on the ATLAS.ti Platform



Note. Captured coding research project from the ATLAS.ti software.

Figure 6.1 depicts a summary of how research data was coded on the ATLAS.ti software platform. A project was created and labelled accordingly, as per the research title. Eight (8) typed interview transcripts were then loaded. From the interview transcripts, 39 codes were generated and, from these codes, three (3) themes, also referred to as memos according to the ATLAS.ti software language were developed.

The codes generated from the research data, utilising the ATLAS.ti software, are listed as follows:

1. Applicable application of psychometric instruments

2. Concern for psychometric instruments use
3. Required ethical use of psychometric instruments
4. Unfairness to use psychometric instruments in recruitment
5. South Africa capable to develop own psychometric instruments
6. South Africa not yet capable to have own instruments
7. Competency Assessment for SMS applicants
8. SMS Competency Assessment a requirement, per DPSA guideline
9. Definition of psychometric instrument
10. Competency assessment just a compliance matter
11. Concern for non-consideration of assessment results
12. Consequence for non-consideration of competency assessment results
13. Reason for non-consideration of competency assessment results
14. Regulatory challenge of competency assessment
15. Fair to use psychometric instruments in recruitment
16. Psychometric instruments are effective tools in recruitment
17. Psychometric instruments are used for recruitment
18. Satisfied with use of psychometric instruments
19. Strength of psychometric instruments
20. Psychometric instruments not used for all positions
21. Psychometric instruments should not be used for all positions
22. Purpose of psychometric instruments
23. Psychometric instruments not valuable for recruitment
24. Reason for non-use of psychometric instruments
25. Reason for not using psychometric instruments
26. Recruitment must be an independent process
27. Recruitment process differs for SMS applicants

28. Recruitment process not the same for all positions
29. Recruitment the same for all positions
30. Solution to ensure uniformity of the recruitment process
31. Solution needed to ensure consideration of competency assessment results
32. Technical assessment during recruitment of SMS applicants
33. Technical assessment for particular positions
34. Technical assessment useful in recruitment
35. Technical test compulsory during interviews of SMS applicants
36. Competency assessment not part of recruitment
37. Effectiveness of competency assessment
38. Ineffectiveness of competency assessment
39. Use of competency assessment results

Data analysis (Categorisation/ Interpretation). This phase is a continuation of phase one of generating codes. In this phase, further categorisation and interpretation of data occur. Therefore, from the 39 codes generated in phase one, code groups were established, as illustrated in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1

Code Groups Identified from the Codes Generated

Code	Code Groups
● Applicable application of psychometric instruments	Application of psychometric instruments
● Concern for psychometric instruments use	Application of psychometric instruments
● Required ethical use of psychometric instruments	Application of psychometric instruments
● Unfairness to use psychometric instruments in recruitment	Application of psychometric instruments
● South Africa capable to develop own psychometric instruments	Capability of the country to develop and use own psychometric instruments
● South Africa not yet capable to have own instruments	Capability of the country to develop and use own psychometric instruments

• Competency Assessment for SMS applicants	Competency assessment compulsory
• SMS Competency Assessment a requirement per DPSA guideline	Competency assessment compulsory
• Definition of psychometric instrument	Definition of a psychometric instrument
• Competency assessment just a compliance matter	Non-consideration of competency assessment results
• Concern for non-consideration of assessment results	Non-consideration of competency assessment results
• Consequence for non-consideration of competency assessment results	Non-consideration of competency assessment results
• Reason for non-consideration of competency assessment results	Non-consideration of competency assessment results
• Regulatory challenge of competency assessment	Non-consideration of competency assessment results
• Fair to use psychometric instruments in recruitment	Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment
• Psychometric instruments are effective tools in recruitment	Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment
• Psychometric instruments are used for recruitment	Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment
• Satisfied with use of psychometric instruments	Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment
• Strength of psychometric instruments	Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment
• Psychometric instruments not used for all positions	Psychometric instruments not meant for all positions
• Psychometric instruments should not be used for all positions	Psychometric instruments not meant for all positions
• Purpose of psychometric instruments	Purpose of psychometric instruments
• Psychometric instruments not valuable for recruitment	Reasons for non-use of psychometric instruments
• Reason for non-use of psychometric instruments	Reasons for non-use of psychometric instruments
• Reason for not using psychometric instruments	Reasons for non-use of psychometric instruments
• Recruitment must be an independent process	Recruitment process
• Recruitment process differs for SMS applicants	Recruitment process
• Recruitment process not the same for all positions	Recruitment process
• Recruitment the same for all positions	Recruitment process
• Solution to ensure uniformity of the recruitment process	Recruitment process

• Solution needed to ensure consideration of competency assessment results	Solutions to ensure consideration of competency assessment results
• Technical assessment during recruitment of SMS applicants	Technical assessments in recruitment
• Technical assessment for particular positions	Technical assessments in recruitment
• Technical assessment useful in recruitment	Technical assessments in recruitment
• Technical test compulsory during interviews of SMS applicants	Technical assessments in recruitment
• Competency assessment not part of recruitment	Use of competency assessment results
• Effectiveness of competency assessment	Use of competency assessment results
• Ineffectiveness of competency assessment	Use of competency assessment results
• Use of competency assessment results	Use of competency assessment results

Table 6.1 shows that 13 code groups were identified from the codes generated. In this phase, the researcher provided colours to codes for easy identification during the code grouping exercise. The code groups identified are: Application of psychometric instruments; Capability of the country to develop and use own psychometric instruments; Competency assessment compulsory; Definition of psychometric instrument; Non-consideration of competency assessment results; Psychometric instruments fair in recruitment; Psychometric instruments not meant for all positions; Purpose of psychometric instruments; Reasons for non-use of psychometric instruments; Recruitment process; Solutions to ensure consideration of competency assessment results; Technical assessments in recruitment; and Use of competency assessment results. These code groups then served as a guideline to develop themes.

Table 6.2 below illustrates the three (3) themes that were developed from the coding process of the research data.

Table 6.2

Themes Developed from Code Groups Utilising the ATLAS.ti Software

Theme	Density
Competency Assessment	12
Psychometric Instruments	18
Recruitment Process	9

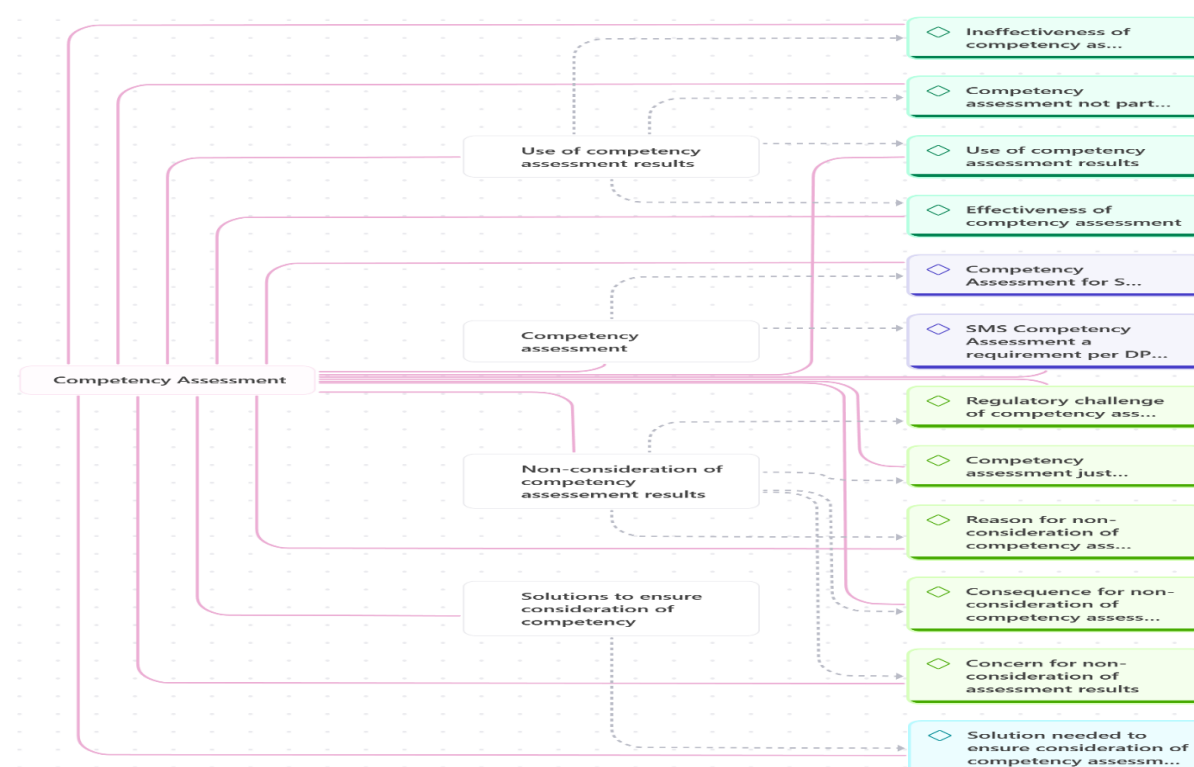
As illustrated in Table 6.2, the following three (3) themes were developed: Competency Assessment, Psychometric Instruments, and Recruitment Process. These themes were developed based on the concentration of concepts that emerged from the research data. The value of the density indicates the extent of concentration of each respective theme within the research data. This density value is determined by codes generated from the research data.

In further utilising the analysis tools of the ATLAS.ti software, sanky diagrams were used to summarise the link between codes, code groups and themes.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the codes and code groups linked to the theme named Competency Assessment.

Figure 6.2

Competency Assessment



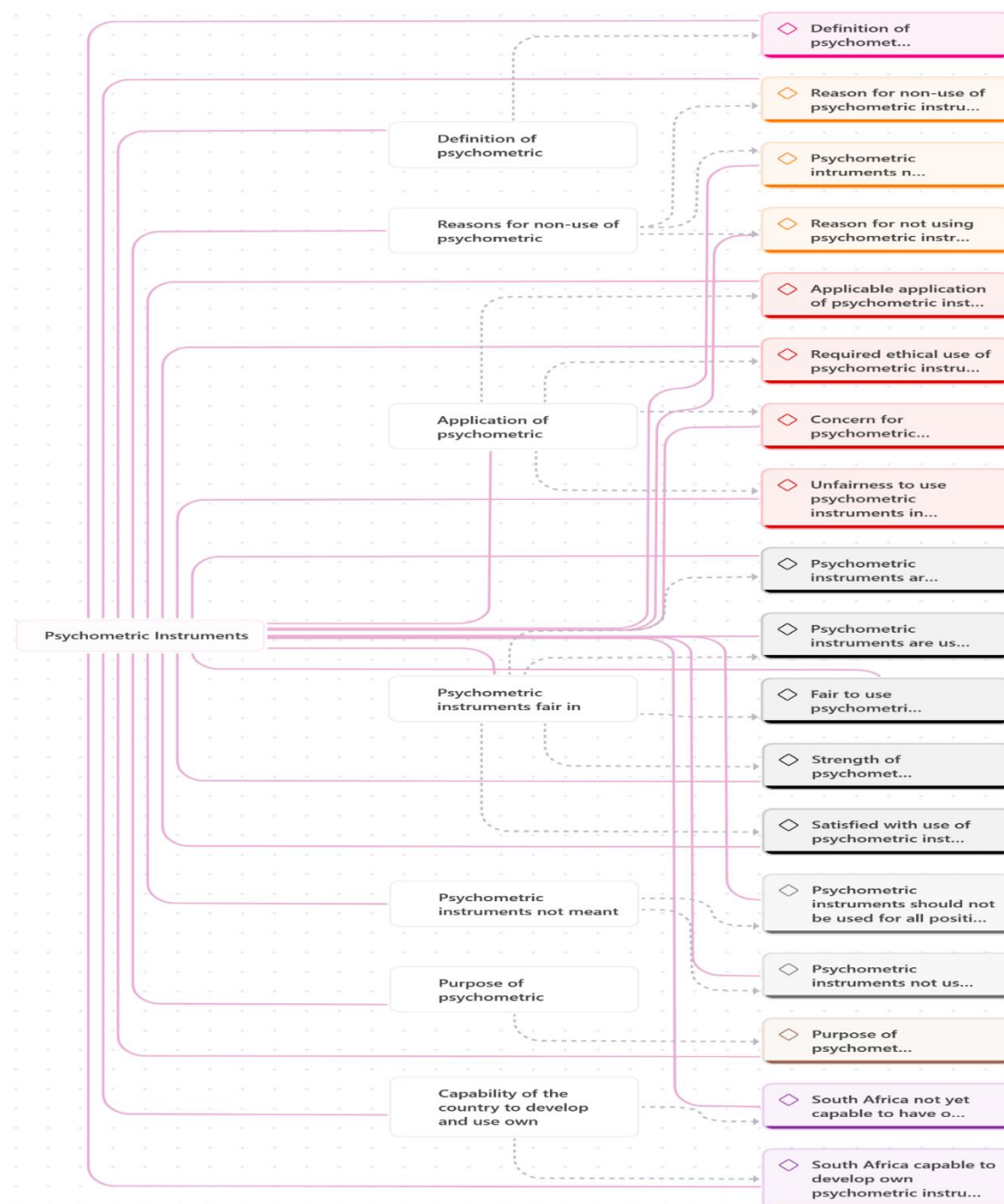
Note. Screenshot of a sanky diagram drawn from research project created utilising the ATLAS.ti software.

From Figure 6.2, it is noted that the theme Competency Assessment emanated from four (4) code groups, which were developed from 12 codes generated from the research data.

Figure 6.3 illustrates the codes and code groups linked to the theme named Psychometric Instruments.

Figure 6.3

Psychometric Instruments



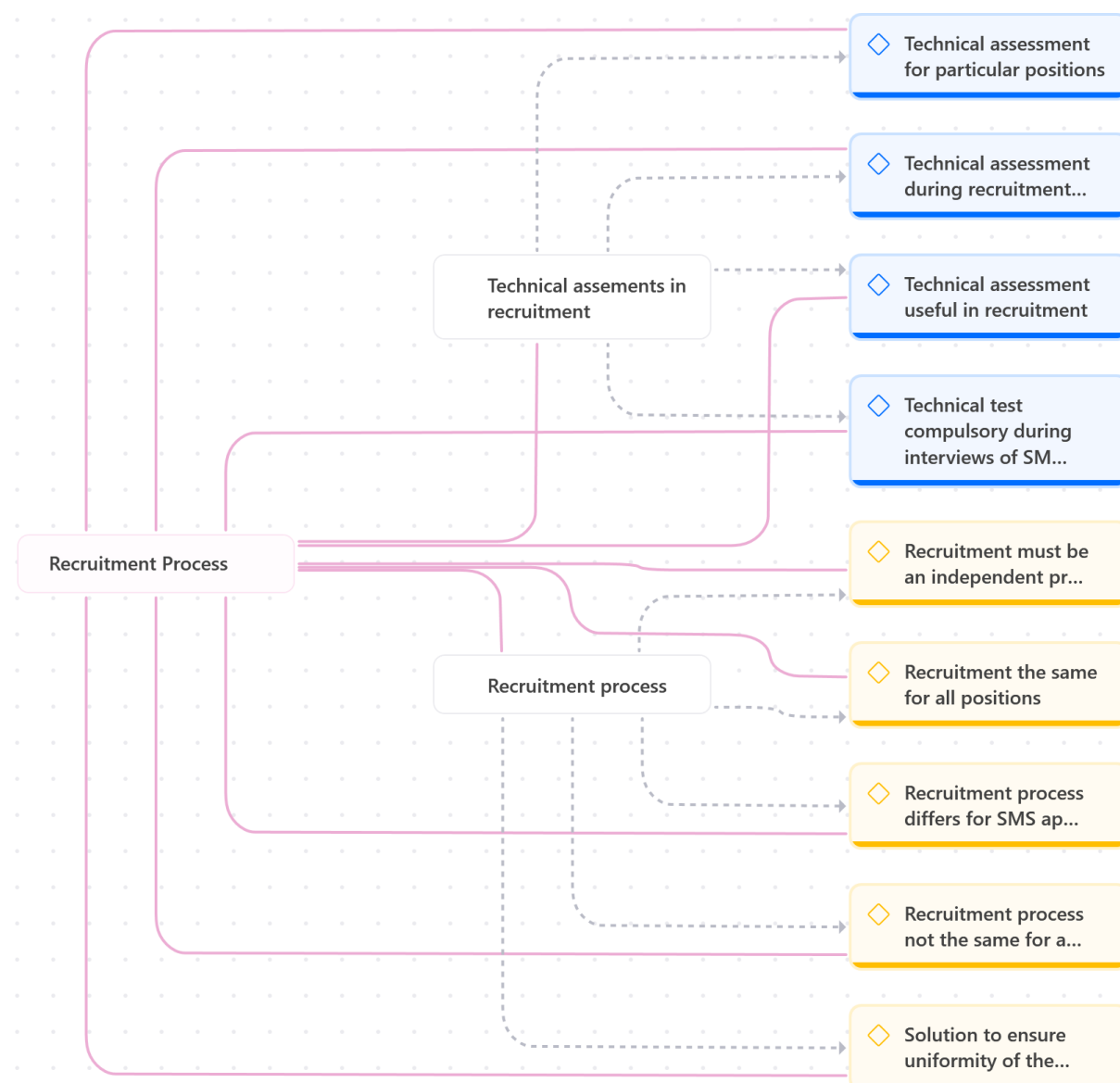
Note. Screenshot of a sanky diagram drawn from research project created utilising the ATLAS.ti software.

Figure 6.3 shows that the theme Psychometric Instruments was developed from seven (7) code groups, which were formed from 18 codes generated from the research data.

Figure 6.4 illustrates the codes and code groups linked to the theme named Psychometric Instruments.

Figure 6.4

Recruitment Process



Note. Screenshot of a sanky diagram drawn from research project created utilising the ATLAS.ti software.

Figure 6.4 illustrates that the theme Recruitment Process was decided from the two (2) code groups, which were developed from nine (9) codes generated from the research data.

Summary

This chapter focused on the process of data analysis using the Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS), ATLAS.ti. A project was created, coding was done, code groups were established, and themes were identified. Sanky diagrams, drawn from the ATLAS.ti software, were utilised to further elaborate on how codes were generated, code groups identified, and the themes developed are linked together. The interpretation of the data and findings will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Interpretation of Data and Discussion of Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of findings through the interpretation of data, linking it to key citations from the literature. This discussion of the findings is organised by research questions.

The aim of the research was to understand the perceptions of human resource managers in the public sector on the use of psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process, their concerns and their challenges in this regard.

The use of psychometric testing, as a scientific process in the work context, cannot be avoided, since it plays such a crucial role in helping organisations to transform, as they strive for excellence and satisfactory service delivery to their clients/stakeholders. This change should start with the function of human resource management, particularly in the sphere of the recruitment and selection process, to attract, choose and appoint suitable candidates for vacant positions within the organisation.

The public sector is an industry that governs the country and is mainly the service provider to its citizens. To achieve its mandatory purpose of providing good service delivery to its citizens, government structures need to hire competitive and suitable personnel through an effective employee appointment process that fairly assesses the candidate. In support of this, Mchunu (2019) highlighted that public sector recruitment is a very important aspect of governance and service delivery. It is therefore empirical that the public sector employs effective recruitment and selection practices that, according to Mchunu (2019), will ensure that the government attracts and employs suitable candidates, that will enable them to meet service delivery objectives across the local, provincial and national spheres of government.

Interpretation of data and discussion of findings are elaborated below.

Data Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Research data was interpreted and discussed to address the following empirical research questions respectively:

1. What does the current recruitment and selection method used by the public sector entails?

In the public sector, human resource management, particularly on issues of recruitment and selection, is managed in collaboration with and is regulated by the Office of the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission developed a guide, the “Toolkit on Recruitment and Selection”, which, among others, suggested recruitment and selection techniques, including psychometric testing. This toolkit was disseminated to the public service sector through the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), and it served as a guide for respective Departments for develop their respective recruitment and selection policy.

All Participants indicated that their employee appointment process is in line with the directives of the DPSA and it involves advertisement of the position in the DPSA circular, shortlisting, and then conducting interviews, however, the process is not the same for all positions. Inclusive in the employee appointment process of the senior management services candidates, is the technical test and competency framework. However, the application of this competency framework was mentioned to be just a compliance matter, since its results are not considered to make hiring decisions during the employee appointment process of senior management service candidates. A concern about employee misfit emanating from the non-consideration of the results from the competency assessment framework was highlighted that disregarding the ‘red flags’ from the competency assessment results, might cost the organisation in the future. This concern is supported by William and Perumal (2021), who indicated that the appointment of an unsuitable candidate is a misfit and it is an undesirable and unpleasant condition that negatively affect the growth of the organisation. Furthermore, Bakhshwain and Javed (2021); Baron et al. (2020); Collings et al. (2019); Kenku et al. (2026) and Khandelwal and Kumar (2019) regarded recruitment and selection as crucial practices that are directly linked to the success and growth of the

organisation. It is for this reason that Botutihe et al. (2021) warned that, if this process is not correctly carried out, it will negatively influence company goals.

Various reasons for this non-consideration were highlighted by various participants and among others, is lack of knowledge on how to analyse and use the results to make hiring decisions. The historical introduction, administration and use of these kinds of tools to disadvantage the minority population of the country was also highlighted as another reason for non-consideration for the competency assessment results during the recruitment and selection process of senior management personnel in the public sector. This narrative resonates with the concerns expressed about how psychometric instruments were introduced to and historically utilised in South Africa. This is elaborated by Foxcroft and Modack (2018) that psychometric testing was introduced in South Africa in 1915 and was developed in an environment characterised by unequal access to resources to favour certain racial categories, while disadvantaging others, therefore, the administration of psychometric instruments became unfair and biased to the disadvantaged population of the country, while working in favour of certain racial groups, and this historical discrimination, unfairness and bias misuse of psychometric instruments in South Africa, resulted in the development of negative perceptions concerning the value that it can add.

From the above analysis, it is evident that the employee appointment process in the public sector is not the same for all positions. Additional to the employee appointment process of senior management service candidates is the inclusion of the technical tests and the competency framework which is regarded as just a compliance matter since its results are not considered as valuable information to be integrated in the hiring decisions of senior management service candidates. This non-consideration of the test results from the competency assessment is linked to the historically unfair and bias administration of the psychometric instruments to discriminate the disadvantaged population of the country.

2. What are the reasons why psychometric instruments are not integrated into the employee appointment process in the public sector?

The employee appointment process refers to the recruitment and selection procedures executed by the human resource department of an organisation to attract potential and suitable candidates to fill a vacancy. These procedures, according to Rotimi and Folorunso (2018), involve identifying, attracting and retaining people with the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to fulfil organisational responsibilities.

In addressing this research question, participants' understanding on what a psychometric instrument is, was explored. Furthermore, the researcher drew closer to the participants' specific place of work, to find out if psychometric instruments are used in their employee appointment process, to learn more about the participants' concerns regarding the use or non-use of these instruments in their specific workplaces and to establish if there are any challenges that their employers' experience in implementing psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process. In conclusion, participants' suggestions to address these challenges were explored.

In relation to the global knowledge about psychological tests, all participants are conversant about psychometric instruments. Participants defined a psychometric instrument based on its purpose, that it is a tool that is used to assess an individual's skills and competencies such as personality traits and cognitive capabilities and furthermore, to make hiring decisions. In agreement to this definition is various authors such as Cohen et al. (2021) and Theresa (2017) who defined a psychometric instrument as a measuring device designed to assess psychological variables, such as intelligence, personality, aptitude, interest or values. Furthermore, Baron et al. (2020), Foxcroft and Modack (2018), Hernández et al. (2020), and Reuben and Eremie (2020), supported and alluded that, in the work environment, psychometric instruments are utilised for personnel selection and placement.

With regard to the application of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process at respective organisations, the majority of participants indicated that their specific employer does not use psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process and provided reasons that the assessment process is not standard to all Departments, psychometric results are not

considered as valuable information to make informed hiring decisions, identified developmental gaps are not addresses through for example, training, and non-familiarity with the testing process by the low-level personnel. The issue of non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process is supported by Laher (2024) who highlighted that South Africa is still faced with a challenge of heavy reliance to etic instruments and that creates a language barrier since tests are English based which is not the first language for the majority of the population. Cost implication was highlighted as another reason why organisation are not employing psychometric instruments for hiring purposes and this is supported by Kenku et al. (2026), and Memon et al. (2018) who stated that other organisations are unable to utilise psychometric instruments for hiring purposes due to financial constraints. These expenses were outlined by Kenku at al. (2026) as test licensing fees, training of assessors, professional administration, and purchasing of scoring software.

With regard to the challenges experienced in the implementation of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process, the fact that most psychometric instruments are etic became a hinderances to utilise the instrument. Lack of professional monitoring of the psychometric assessment process by the public sector and costs implications were highlighted as other challenges to integrate the psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process. These concerns are supported by Foxcroft and Modack (2018), who stated that, in South Africa, the issue of culturally biased testing surfaced around 1986 whereby there was a growing perception that the Government uses psychometric testing as a tool to disadvantage black South Africans from occupational and educational opportunities, and that led to a negative perception regarding the usefulness of psychological measures and, consequently, a large proportion of the population began to reject the use of psychometric instruments altogether.

In attempting to address the issue of the non-consideration of competency assessment results in the employee appointment process of senior management service candidates, various measures that could be considered were suggested and they are outlined below:

- Provision of training to senior management service members on how to interpret the competency assessment results. In support of this suggestion, Nzimande et al. (2025) mentioned that training in unconscious bias awareness will minimise the challenge of unfair discrimination of certain demographic groups during the psychometric assessment process.
- Outsourcing of the senior management service appointment process, to ensure that the process is properly adhered to. This is supported that Memon et al. (2018) who stated that due to lack of capability within the organisations to implement and administer psychometric testing, many organisations in countries such as Pakistan had outsourced their psychometric testing to ensure continuous and professional utilisation of psychometric instruments. In South Africa, companies such as Psychometric Testing and Evaluation Services, Jopie van Rooyen (JVR) Psychometrics, BLOSS South Africa, and SHL South Africa can provide effective psychometric assessment services to organisations in need of such services. Furthermore, many human resource recruitment agencies in South Africa have included in their package of services psychometric assessment services, which can be provided to their clients when needed. South Africa, like other countries such as Pakistan, has sufficient capacity to ensure that psychometric instruments are professionally utilised in its employee appointment process.
- The appointment of in-house assessors will ensure familiarity with psychometric instruments and implementation of its results.
- The establishment of an in-house Department within the public sector to ensure professional utilisation of the psychometric instruments for management appointments. This view is supported by Foxcroft and Modack (2018, pp.171-172) that in the workplace, the effectiveness of the legislation and controls governing psychological testing and

assessment can be ensured by organisations utilising such psychological practices by ensuring that:

“it has an assessment policy in place that reflects fair, ethical practices; it employs assessment practitioners who are competent, who have been appropriately trained in the specific measures that they need to use, and who are mentored and supervised where necessary (especially when they are inexperienced); valid assessment measures are used for appropriate purposes; assessment results are used in a non-discriminatory manner; it has support mechanisms in place to assist assessment practitioners to build a research database that can be used to establish the fairness and efficacy of the measures used and the decisions made; it regularly monitors the extent to which its assessment policy is being put into effect ‘on the ground’ and revises it where necessary”.

From the above analysis, it is evident that participants are aware about what a psychometric instrument is and its capabilities. However, this instrument is not compulsory integrated in the employee appointment process in the majority of the public sector organisations due to particularly non-familiarity of the psychometric testing process by the low-level personnel and costs implications to establish the psychometric testing function in the organisation. The fact that most psychometric instruments are etic, results in the rejection of the value it can add by the majority of the population.

3. What are the views or opinions of human resource managers concerning the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process?

The views or opinions of human resource managers concerning the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process was explored through participants views about the effectiveness and fair application of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process. Furthermore, general views of participants on the use of psychometric instruments in the

employee appointment process in South Africa, and also on the country's capability to develop its own psychometric instruments were explored.

All the participants acknowledged that psychometric instruments are effective tools to be utilised during the employee appointment process. Participants attested that this effectiveness is guaranteed by the psychometric properties of the instrument and its standard administration to all. Supporting this declaration, Chen et al. (2021), Gallagher and Yalch (2022), and Nzimande et al. (2025) commented that a psychometric instrument is declared sound when its validity and reliability satisfy the purpose that the instrument is meant to achieve. Furthermore, participants regarded psychometric instruments capable to assess inherent individual's characteristics and abilities and to save the organisation time and costs by ensuring that the right candidate that is ready and willing to serve is hired. In support of these narrations, Chipana-Castillo et al. (2021), Magro & Vella (2020), Memon et al. (2018), and Saha (2020), stated that psychometric instruments are valuable tools for assessing the candidates' attributes, such as aptitude, personality, skills and motivation. Adding to the participants views on the effectiveness use of psychometric instruments, Baron et al. (2018) added that the quality of employees is dependent on the effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment and selection process. This is substantiated by Sartori et al. (2020), who mentioned that psychometric testing is key to ensuring that the organisation makes informed decisions regarding personnel selection, based on the inherent requirements of the job. It is for this reason that many organisations rely on psychometric testing results to make recommendations on employment decisions (Caska, 2019; Magro & Vella, 2020; Memon et al., 2018).

With regard to the fair application of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process, Participants indicated that fair application of the psychometric instrument is dependent on the ethical application of the instrument where there are no discrimination and cultural biasness against some test takers. These conditions are substantiated by Cohen et al. (2021) highlighting that legal and ethical considerations concerning psychometric testing and psychological

assessment are burning issues to the public at large, it is therefore imperative that test developers and test users are well informed about the laws, administrative regulations, and other rules and professional codes of conduct, to guide them in the use of tests and test scores. Additionally, Nzimande et al. (2025) mentioned that cultural biasness in psychometric testing and psychological assessment can lead to unfair discrimination of certain demographic groups, and this issue is crucial in the South African context where diversity, equity and inclusion are important priorities in policy development.

Contrary to the fair use of the psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process, some participants held that it is not fair to utilise such instruments due to lack of exposure to the psychometric instruments by the majority previously disadvantaged population of the country and furthermore due to the fact that its results are not considered to make hiring decisions. In line with these views, Foxcroft (2011) stated that, due to the disparity in the levels of literacy and education, many people in South Africa are less exposed to the nature of psychological testing in their everyday experience.

With regard to the general views on the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in South Africa, participants' perceptions were different. Some participants are of the opinion that psychometric instruments are beneficial to minimise biasness in recruitment whereas others view them as reliable tools used by the private sector to make hiring decisions due to its profit-driven nature of their business. Furthermore, cultural diversity and educational background of test takers were also highlighted as issues that need to be considered in our country when using psychometric instruments. Additionally, a note was made that psychometric instruments should assess job-related competencies to prevent poor appointments thus resulting in good service delivery. Another participant is of the view that "psychometric instruments need to be quite clear, simplistic, practical, and service-related to ensure that they bring the right and ethical people into government." On the contrary, another participant is of the view that previously, good hiring decisions were made without the use of psychometric instruments.

With regard to the participants views about the capability of South Africa to utilise psychometric instruments developed in the country, some participants stated that the country is not yet capable of developing its own psychometric instruments. This narration is supported by Foxcroft and Modack (2018) who highlighted that South Africa is currently in possession of too few experts' test developers and is currently faced with the challenge of evolving the next generation of test developers. Due to this challenge, Laher (2024) highlighted that South Africa is still faced with challenges of heavy reliance on etic psychometric instruments whereby their psychometric properties have not been established to the dynamic context of the country hence no indication of possible adaptation of the instrument, the instrument will be utilised with either very few South African norms, outdated or norms based on a small and particular population.

On the contrary, some participants are of the notion that South Africa can develop its own psychometric instruments through modifying instruments from other countries to suit the South African context. This process is called test adaptation and is defined as a process whereby a psychometric instrument developed in one context is modified to suit the culture and language of the population of another context where the instrument is intended to be used, and to ensure that scores from the original and the modified instruments can be fairly comparable between individuals who took the instrument. Due to the challenge of having scarce test developers, South Africa finds itself in a position where it must utilise international psychometric instruments. However, such instruments should first be subjected to the adaptation process into the South African context, to ensure that test results are valid and reliable for test takers from diverse backgrounds (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018).

From the above analysis, it is evident that the effectiveness and efficiency of psychometric instruments is acknowledged by all participants. However, this effectiveness is dependent on the validity and reliability of the instrument to ensure that the instrument serve the purpose it is meant to be. Furthermore, participants mentioned that the application of the psychometric instrument will be regarded fair if its results are not discriminatory and culturally biased against some test takers.

Participants generally view the use of psychometric instrument in the employee appointment process in South Africa beneficial in minimising biasness in the hiring process, however, cultural diversity and educational background of test-takers need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, participants are of the view that South Africa is not yet capable to use emic psychometric instruments therefore, a need to adapt etic psychometric instruments to suit the country's context.

Summary

This chapter presented the interpretation of data and a discussion of findings through addressing the following empirical research questions:

1. What does the current recruitment and selection method used by the public sector entails?
2. What are the reasons why psychometric instruments are not integrated into the employee appointment process in the public sector?
3. What are the views or opinions of human resource managers concerning the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process?

From the findings, it was gathered that the employee appointment process of the senior management service candidates in the public sector exclusively includes the technical tests and the competency framework which is only administered as a compliance matter to the DPSA regulation. Non - consideration of the test results from the competency assessment is associated to the historically unfair and bias administration of the psychometric instruments in the country. Non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process by low-level personnel and costing are highlighted hindrances to compulsory integrate psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the majority of the public sector organisations. The fact that South Africa is not yet capable to use emic psychometric instruments, etic psychometric instruments should firstly go through the adaption process to ensure its suitability into the South African context to address the issue of discrimination and cultural biasness. The psychometric properties of the

instrument is also regarded crucial to ensure its purposeful utilisation. The major findings and conclusions are discussed in the next chapter, and some recommendations are made

Chapter 8

Summary of Major Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

Foxcroft and Modack (2018), and Laher and Cockcroft (2014) mentioned that psychological assessment in South Africa dates to as early as 1915. These assessments were politically driven, whereby psychometric instruments, particularly measures of intellectual ability, which were developed and standardised on educated Westernised South Africans, were misused. These psychometric instruments were administered to illiterate, uneducated or poorly educated South Africans, and the results were used as justification for job reservation and to prove the superiority of one group over another (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Laher & Cockcroft, 2013, 2014). Foxcroft and Modack (2018), and Laher and Cockcroft (2014), reported that this historical discrimination, unfairness and bias, has resulted in the development of negative perceptions concerning the value that it can add.

To address the malpractice of psychometric testing, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998) was promulgated (Foxcroft & Modack, 2018; Laher, 2024; Nzimande et al., 2025). The aim of this Act is “to achieve equity in the workplace by promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment” (Government Gazette, 1998). Particularly, Chapter 2, Section 8 of the Act, as stipulated by the Government Gazette (1998) states that

“psychological testing and other similar forms of assessments of an employee are prohibited, unless the test or assessment being used (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable; (b) can be applied fairly to employees; and (c) is not biased against any employee or group.”

Furthermore transformation efforts on psychological assessment were made and are continuing to be made through various research studies published in journals such as the South African Journal of Psychology, the Journal of Psychology in Africa, and the African Journal of Psychological Assessment, and the annual congresses held by various bodies of psychology

such as the Psychology Society of South Africa (PsySSA), the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology in South Africa (SIOPSA), the South African Neuropsychological Association (SACNA), and the International Test Commission (Laher, 2024).

Despite these positive developments to regulate the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa, psychometric testing and psychological assessment in South Africa is still faced with challenges of heavy reliance on etic psychometric instruments with no psychometric properties established in the South Africa context, normative issue whereby there are either few, or outdated, or South African norms established from small and specific samples, language barrier whereby tests are English based which is not the first language for the majority of the population, tests content are Eurocentric, and high purchase tests pricing from local test distributors (Laher, 2024). Despite this limitation, psychometric instruments in South Africa are still regarded as valuable tools to effectively and objectively assess the individuals' inherent job attributes such as attitudes, aptitude, skills, personality, beliefs, values, and motivation (Chipana-Castillo et al., 2021; Magro & Vella, 2020; Memon et al., 2018; Saha, 2020). Irrespective to this positive regard, psychometric instruments appear less utilised for recruitment and selection purposes in the public sector. Exclusion of the psychometric testing as a compulsory technique during the recruitment and selection process of employment shows that the use thereof for employment purposes, particularly in the public sector, is a debatable topic.

The objective of the study was, therefore, to understand the perceptions of public sector human resource managers on the use of psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process, their concerns and their challenges in this regard.

Major Findings

The conclusion of the study is drawn up through addressing the empirical research questions that follow.

1. What does the current recruitment and selection method used by the public sector entails?

From the study, it transpired that, in the public sector, the employee appointment process is not the same for all positions. The employee appointment process of senior management services candidates takes a different approach, with the inclusion of technical tests and a competency framework.

2. What are the reasons why psychometric instruments are not integrated into the employment appointment process in the public sector?

From the study, it was gathered that the majority of public sector organisations does not utilise psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process. Non-use of psychometric instruments was linked to monetary costs; non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process by employees in lower-level positions; and a lack of an in-house Department to monitor the ethical use of competency assessments.

3. What are the views or opinions of human resource managers concerning the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process?

From the study, it was evident that psychometric instruments are regarded useful and effective tools that saves the organisation time and revenue by ensuring that the right candidates are hired. However, the application of the competency framework appears to be just a compliance matter, since its results are not considered to make hiring decisions for senior management service candidates.

The issue of fair application of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the public sector is still a debatable matter. The history of how psychometric testing was introduced, administered and used to disadvantage the minority population of the country; ethical concerns about the application of the psychometric instruments, the country's cultural diversity, and the disparity in levels of literacy and education of the local population are highlighted as burning issues with regard to the fair application of the psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process. It is therefore clear that, in the public sector, psychometric instruments are still perceived as biased and discriminatory.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to understand the perceptions of human resource managers in the public sector on the use of psychometric instruments in their employee selection process, their concerns and their challenges in this regard.

The study indicated that human resource managers in the public sector are aware of the value and effectiveness of psychometric testing in the employee appointment process. However, despite the usefulness of psychometric testing to enable informed and scientifically based decisions, fair administration and application of psychometric instruments is still debatable in the public sector. psychometric instruments are still perceived as biased and discriminatory, due to the following reasons:

- the historical introduction, administration and use of psychometric testing, to disadvantage the minority population of the country
- ethical considerations regarding the application of psychometric instruments
- the cultural diversity of South Africa
- disparity in levels of literacy and education among South Africans
- non-familiarity with the psychometric testing process by employees in lower-level positions.

Lack of in-house capacity to monitor the psychological processes, resulted in disregarding psychometric instruments as valuable instruments to assist in making rightful employee appointment decisions.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations are considered essential by the researcher, based on the identified research findings on the perceptions of public service human resource managers on the use of psychometric instruments in their employee appointment process.

- Educate the public sector about the positive impact that the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998) had in ensuring that psychometric instruments biases and discrimination in South Africa are addressed. Such an initiative will promote trust in the psychometric testing process among officials and a greater willingness to integrate such results in hiring decisions.
- Establishment of a psychometric testing Department within the public sector to manage all psychometric testing processes pertaining to the employee appointment process in the public sector. This initiative will save the public sector the costs associated with the outsourcing of this service.
- Establishment of a Department within the public sector to monitor the ethical application of psychometric instruments during the employee appointment process.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

Perceptions on the use of psychometric testing in South Africa are still a wide-open, debatable topic, particularly in the field of human resource management. The researcher, therefore, suggests the following:

- The study focused on a sample of human resource managers, particularly heads of departments in the recruitment and selection section of national government departments in the public sector. Therefore, there is a need to conduct the same research at a provincial level, to enable a greater generalisation of the research findings in the public sector.
- The study focused on the public sector; therefore, there is a need to conduct the same research in the private sector, to compare their views with those of the public sector.
- A response from a research participant stated that “psychometric instruments must be used during the recruitment process, because they make sense to appoint the right candidate, to avoid appointing a burden into the department, where then that particular person needs to be sent to training and also to the labour section due to incompetence.”

Research is, therefore, needed to assess whether cases of employee incompetence are directly related to the non-application of psychometric instruments during the employee appointment process of such an employee.

- Another participant highlighted that another reason why psychometric instruments are not utilised in the employee appointment process is due to the fact that psychometric instruments “are perceived as a threat by unions”. This narration is supported by Laher (2024) who stated that the historical misuse of psychometric testing in South Africa resulted to the unions developing mistrust of the discipline and arguing that it must be banned. Research is therefore needed in the public sector with union representative to assess the current status quo regarding the perceptions on the use of psychometric instruments for hiring purpose. Maybe a focus group interview can be conducted with union representatives from respective public sector organisations. A focus group interview is defined by Pranee (2020) as an organised discussion among a selected small group of about six to ten individuals on a particular topic, to obtain information about their views.

Contribution of the Study

The study makes a valuable contribution by providing comprehensive and substantial empirical findings on the perceptions of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the public sector.

The study contributes to the available body of knowledge as follows:

- It contributes to the existing literature on perceptions about the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process.
- It raises awareness in the public sector on how to better manage the psychometric testing process, to ensure that psychometric test results are correctly applied to make informed employee appointment decisions.

- It elicits interest from academics, researchers and experts, who may want to explore issues relating to perceptions about the use of psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process.

Summary

This chapter discussed the major findings of the study, which evolved from the empirical research questions of the study. The conclusion of the study highlighted that, despite its usefulness, psychological tests are still perceived as biased and discriminatory by the public sector. Based on the research findings, recommendations were made, and the limitations and contribution of the study were highlighted.

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Topic: The Perceptions of Human Resource Managers on the use of Psychometric Instruments in the Public Sector

Theme A: Employee appointment process of the organisation.

1. Kindly take me through the steps of the employee appointment process that the organisation undertakes from recruitment to the final appointment of the suitable candidate.
2. Does the organisation follow the same employee appointment process for all positions? YES or NO
 - 2.1. If YES, are or is there particular reason(s) as to why the same process is followed for all positions?
 - 2.2. If NO, for which positions do the employee appointment process differ?
 - 2.2.1. What steps are then followed during the employee appointment of these positions?

Theme B: Definition and use of psychometric instruments.

1. In your own understanding, what is a psychometric instrument?
2. What do you think psychometric instruments are used for OR for what purpose do you think psychometric instruments are used for?
3. In your own opinion, do you think psychometric instruments are effective tools to be utilised during the employee appointment process? YES or NO.

Motivate you answer

4. In your own opinion, do you think it is fair to utilise psychometric instruments in the employee appointment process in the Public Service? YES or NO.

Motivate your answer

Theme C: The use of psychometric instruments in the organisation.			
1. Does the organisation use psychometric instruments in its employee selection process? YES or NO.			
If YES:		If NO:	
Are these tools utilised during the employee appointment process of all positions? YES or NO		Are there particular challenges that the organisation is experiencing or facing to implement the use of psychometric instruments in its employee appointment process? YES or NO.	
If YES Do you have any concern with the manner in which these psychometric instruments are used in the organisation? YES OR NO If YES, what are those concerns that you have regarding the manner in which your organisation use psychometric instruments? In your own opinion, what do you think can or should the organisation do to minimise your concerns?	If NO For which level positions does the organisation utilise psychometric instruments? For which level position does the organisation not utilise psychometric instruments? In your own opinion, do you think the organisation needs to utilise psychometric instruments for all positions? YES or NO Motive your answer	If YES What are those challenges? What steps or action did the organisation took to deal with the mentioned challenges?	If NO In your own opinion, what do you think are or could be reason (s) why psychometric instruments are not utilised in the employee appointment process of the organisation?

Theme D: General views on the use of psychometric instruments in South Africa.

1. what is your general view on the use of psychometric instruments for employee selection process in South Africa.
2. Do you think South Africa has the capacity to utilise psychometric instruments developed in the country? Motivate your answer.