

Problematic Issues of Personality Assessment in Selection: an Exploration Study in Vietnam

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Abstract

Research purpose:

This study explores the problematic issues with the use of personality tests in the context of Vietnam.

Research motivation:

Hundreds of primary research and dozens of meta-analyses have been published since the mid-1980s strongly support the use of personality assessment in staffing decision-making. However, personality assessments for staffing purposes have some potentially problematic issues. Understanding these problematic issues can help to provide practical suggestions for hiring managers.

Research design, approach and method:

The research was conducted using qualitative methods and in-depth interviews with 17 Vietnamese participants. Clustering, pattern-matching, and critical discourse analysis were used as primary techniques to analyze data. Themes derived from reviewing existing literature were used as patterns to test the phenomenon in Vietnam

Main findings:

Results show that most studied Vietnamese companies found using Personality tests in job selection have some potentially problematic issues. The most concerning issues are Faking and Personality assessment in contexts. Other issues have not yet become the salient concerns of most companies.

Practical/managerial implications:

The study highlights four implications for hiring managers: (1) using the appropriate personality assessment instrument; (2) a clear guideline about ethical behavior should be developed; (3) practitioners must ensure they update their understanding of legislation in the field; (4) taking cross-culture approach to understand personality traits is important for personality assessment across cultures.

Keywords: recruitment, selection, personality assessment, faking, legal issue, ethical issue

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of personality involves attempts to explain and predict behavior by trying to determine “why” people do things in context (Christiansen et al., 2013). Personality assessment consists of procedures for identifying what people are like and how they are likely to feel, think and act (Greene and Weiner, 2017).

Hundreds of primary research and dozens of meta-analyses have been published since the mid of 1980s strongly support the use of personality assessment in staffing decision-making (Ones et al., 2007). Traditional personality assessments use

questionnaires to determine someone’s personality. Personality assessment is increasingly popular in personnel selection *because of* the advent of Five Factor Model (FFM) made personality traits more accessible and manageable *and because* meta-analyses allow personality test scores to be meaningfully correlated and useful for job performance (Tett & Christiansen 2007). The number of commercially available personality inventories is quite large because of its usefulness in Human Resource management (Prewett et al., 2013). Prewett et al. (2013) review the strengths and weaknesses of 12 generally recognized and reputable personality inventories: 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), California Psychological

Inventory (CPI), Caliper Profile, Global Personality Inventory-Adaptive (GPI-A), Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality II (MMPI-2), Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), Neuroticism-Extraversion-Openness Personality Inventory-3 (NEO-PI-3), Occupational Personality Questionnaire-32m and -32i (OPQ-32), Personality Research Form (PRE), and Wonderlic 5 (formerly the Personal Characteristics Inventory or PCI). They found the need for a careful examination of the available options when selecting a personality inventory for practice or research.

Content analysis shows that around a third of interviews as personnel selection tool are related to personality tendencies (Tett & Christiansen 2008). Conscientiousness is the most personality trait which is frequently assessed in job interviews (Gatewood, Feild & Barrick 2011). Tett & Christiansen (2008) summarize four reasons: (1) interviews are involved increased cognitive demands, (2) interviewee's behavior (verbal and non-verbal) indicate traits beyond response content, (3) ratings of interview are not in interviewees' direct control, (4) responses in interview need to be constructed, while responses in inventories require mere recognition. However, personality assessments for staffing purposes have some potentially problematic issues (Arthur, Woehr & Graziano 2001). Besides, the fact that future recruitment seems to be more flexible (Proctor 2010), and that technology creates changing in many aspects of recruitment (Mischel, 2009) make personality assessment becomes one of the most rapidly changing topic in the field (Gatewood, Feild & Barrick 2011). In addition, from the view of practitioners, there may be conflict between economical possibility and scientific adequate in assessment. Therefore, a balance between these two perspectives (economic and scientific perspectives) is needed to adequately apply and gain sustainable development in the field (Van de Vijver 2008). By reviewing current literature on the topics of interest, we find the most popular problematic issues with the use of personality assessment in job selection are: *Faking issues, Personality assessment in context, ethical issues, legal issues, personality assessment across cultures*. Using these themes as theoretical patterns, the authors conduct empirical research to explore the problematic issues with the use of personality tests in the context of Vietnam. The findings will be used to provide practical suggestions for hiring managers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Faking issues

Faking is defined as "conscious distortions of answers to the interview questions in order to obtain a better score on the interview and/or create favorable perceptions" (Levashina and Campion, 2007, p. 1639). *Faking* is one of the most popular issues among test takers (Goffin & Boyd, 2009) and thus, has been widely examined (Birkeland et al., 2006). Melchers et al. (2020)

review the existing literature on applicant faking in selection interviews found that most applicants fake at least to some degree. Research also found that faking is frequent in personality test (Griffith et al., 2007). Interviewing is less susceptible to faking than self-report inventories and interviewers can reliably and distinctively pick up interviewees' straits through the interview (Tett & Christiansen 2008).

There are two main reasons for candidates' faking (Levashina and Campion, 2007, p. 1639): (1) candidates may engage in faking to meet requirements of interview questions and to make a positive impression on the interviewer, (2) candidates perceive different truth or information could be invented. Information can be added to the perceived truth in many ways. Job candidates might answer interview questions with the image of an ideal candidate in their mind. They might exaggerate their job-related credentials, past achievements or omit some information that they think might decrease their score or their chance of selection. They might present verifiably false information.

Capacity to fake and opportunity to fake are two important aspects in faking during the interview. The capacity to fake comprises skills such as verbal skills, social skills, or cognitive ability. Opportunity to fake comprises characteristics of the interview type and format that can enable or hinder applicants' faking (Melchers et al., 2020).

Organizations often worry about the consequence of faking in their selection process (Stewart et al., 2010). Studies found that self-reported faking does influence interview ratings (Amaral et al., 2019). Because if applicants who fake receive better ratings in interviews but do not perform better at work, organizations may run the risk of overlooking highly qualified applicants while hiring less qualified ones (Roulin et al., 2015). Thus, organizations try to find ways to detect faking during interview (Steiner, 2012). Unfortunately, research found that interviewers are not able to reliably identify when applicants fake (Roulin and Krings, 2016) and common correction methods failed to accurately detect individuals who distort (Stewart et al. 2010). Thus, there is a need to find suitable strategies to help detect faking. One popular strategy is letting interviewers be aware of interviewees might fake. Toris and DePaulo (1984) found that applicants who were interviewed by awareness (of faking issue) interviewers felt somewhat less successful in their attempts to portray their intended impressions (even though they were not less successful). Roulin and Krings (2016) suggest an alternative route to tackle the faking issue by being careful not to emphasize the competitive nature of their selection process when providing information to applicants during or before the interview or test because applicants tend to fake more if they feel there is more competitive in job selection. Griffith et al. (2007) suggest personality measures should not be used alone. Rather they should be included in a test battery of measures that are less susceptible to faking behavior. In

addition, applied researchers must continue research efforts to address the faking issue.

Personality assessment in contexts

Hough & Oswald (2008) highlight the importance of context in personality assessment. They suggest that personality may be predictive under typical conditions of job performance. People such as industrial organization psychologists can understand more about individuals' differences by understanding their functions in a specific context and their salient characteristics (Hattrup and Jackson 1996 cited in Hough & Oswald 2008). Tett & Christiansen (2007) take special consideration for the situation. They reviewed current literature and found that situational specificity as substantive factor affects the relationship between personality and job performance, some validities are lower, and some are higher across specific situational contexts. Therefore, where and how personality variables are the most likely influence on behavior and performance should be carefully considered.

Meisenberg (2015) argues that if the measurements of personality dimensions at the country level are valid, they are expected to correlate with real-world outcomes in meaningful ways. However, Heggstad & Gordon (2008) found that many personality assessments used in selection decision making have not been specifically created for use in selection setting. These measures are more about general assessments of respondents' personalities. Thus, its components and instruction sets do not focus on a specific situational context. People who work in an industrial-organizational context care more about traits that are predictive behavior across work-related situations. Contextualized personality assessments are a solution for this issue but it questions that how much contextualization is needed in the items and in the measure? This question has not been adequately answered. Although additional research is required to answer this question, Heggstad & Gordon (2008) suggest both researchers and practitioners should consistently use contextualized personality assessments in selection because, with some more supports from empirical research, contextualized measures of personality assessment would become a best practice in the field.

Barrett (2008) raises another matter about personality assessment in different contexts and different jobs. After reviewing Guion and Gottier's article (1965), the author impressively found that Guion and Gottier (1965) strongly proposed that a "homemade" test or situation-specific test may have higher validity than an off-the-shelf test because it adds context into consideration. By doing so, the validity of a measure directly results from a particular work-related situation and the criterion of interest. Barrett (2008) recommends this information as a guideline for practitioners who are involved in the selection process of sales personnel or management for organizations.

Regarding personality assessments for different

occupations, Ones et al. (2007) review literature and confirm that conscientiousness is the best generalizable predictor in the Big Five model. Except for conscientiousness, other traits do not predict job performance across different jobs. For different occupations, they present different combinations of the Big Five model. By analyzing meta-analytic operational validities of conscientiousness and its facets in predicting job performance and compound personality traits in relation with the different occupational groups. The authors note that the Big Five should not be considered as an exhaust set of a useful personality measure. They suggest different sets of personality variables can be useful for different occupational groups. Rammstedt et al. (2012) found that for people with low or medium levels of education, the Big Five personality scales typically yield scores that poorly replicate the idealized Big Five-Factor pattern.

From a practitioner's view of personality assessment, Barrett (2008) argues that a practitioner may face some practical problems with an overreliance as the results from meta-analyses of self-report personality test because most practitioners use a simple name matching process to conduct a meta-analysis. For instance, "conscientiousness" is defined as several different scales (eg. dependability). However, in fact, correlations between these scales are low to moderate. Hough et al. (1990) conduct research and found a mean correlation for 12 tests which are contained conscientiousness-related scales is $r = .34$. Barret (2008) wonders this correlation can raise the question about the usage of these scales in measuring the same construct. Most meta-analyses do not adequately provide information associated with occupations or particular tests. Barret (2008) asserts that under the viewpoint of practitioners, the article of Guion and Gottier (1965) was more valuable and practical than meta-analysis which is most notably emerged from Barrick and Mount (1991). Practitioners can use suggestions provided in Guion and Gottier's (1965) article and decide which test presents the highest validity coefficient for a specific job. Indeed, Guion and Gottier (1965) provide a rich source of test across occupations from office workers to managers and so on. However, although there is some interesting point such as the specific context of personality assessments in Guion and Gottier (1965) is worth inheriting, the attitude toward personality inventories and personnel selection has dramatically changed and FFM published by Barrick and Mount (1991) and Tett et al. (1991) is the major response for these changes (Murphy & Dzieweczynski 2005). Nevertheless, narrow traits present a more precise matching of personality traits to the job's nature (Goffin & Boyd 2009). In additions Dilchert et al. (2007) suggest more research is needed for single occupation meta-analyses and single personality test meta-analyses.

Ethical issues

Many people have horror stories about unfair or bad treating in the selection interview. Some of them may

paint more on their stories but the majority of them are true (Fletcher, 1992). Rarely in the context of a selection interview is a consideration of ethical variable (Brabender & Bricklin, 2001) and literature of interviewing does not seem to address the question related to ethical interview in any direct way (Fletcher 1992). However, an ethical practice should be considered as it is an aspect of risk management (Brabender & Bricklin, 2001) and fair recruitment is a part of an organization's managing diversity in the workforce (Lemos 1994). Ethical issues are complicated and there is no clear-cut between right and wrong solution (Russ 2001) but what are morally acceptable behaviors in a job interview should be in attention. This also helps interviewers to avoid some difficult situations. Fletcher (1992) examines ethics issues involved in selection interview through five themes: (1) Interview preparation, (2) Openness, disclosure and the invasion of privacy, (3) Honesty and impression management, (4) Power relationships in the interview, (5) The use of interview information in decision making. Three of these five themes are directly salient of ethics in personality assessment. The first is *interview preparation* in which interviewers often seek information about candidates before interviewing and this finding strongly influences their final assessments. It is usual for an employer to phone a candidate's former employer to get some information about that candidate. However, on ethical grounds, this kind of practice seems to be questionable because individuals do not usually know about this informal information, and thus have no control over what they may say. In second theme *Openness, Disclosure and Invasion of privacy*, two basic questions in terms of ethics are questioning, one is the reason for seeking information on and the second is the degree of self-disclosure which is legitimate to expect of interviewees. Although they mostly seem to be all job-relevant questions, interviewers also often ask about candidates' home background and/or leisure activities and so forth, especially in the case of an unstructured interview which is reasonably found better for trait assessments (Blackman & Funder, 2002). Yet this information may help to predict behavior at work, it also elicits a potential bias for acting unfairly. There is little can be done as solution for this situation except trying to train the interviewer about sensitive interviewing. Candidates may feel in offending if they do not see the relevance between the asked questions with the job. Thus, it is necessary to outline the reasons for seeking such kind of information to candidates. For example, an explanation of a personality inventory to candidates about how it was devised and its measures can reduced the extent to which candidates feel offended or invade privacy (Fink and Butcher 1972 cited in Fletcher 1992). For self-disclosing, interviewers are often challenged to moral and practical dilemma in situation that candidates reveal something unfavorable to themselves. Should interviewers credit interviewees for their frankness or markdown because of candidates' indiscretion? And

how can interviewers assess the importance of this unfavorable information as its relative value to openness? More research is needed to answer these questions. Again, the interviewer should be trained to deal with situations. They need to have sensitive and fair evaluation for such response. Besides that, individuals should be told exactly what is offering by the organization, in terms of the immediate appointment and in terms of career development as well. This fairness seldom happens in real life. Especially when a company is trying to attract the best candidates, they would choose not clear practice than actual deceit. For the next theme *Power relationships in the interview*, in a selection situation, the interviewer can rate the interviewee's personality, and thus, the interviewer generally being thought to be a person that grants what an interviewee wants. Where is power, there always be in potential abuse and therefore interviewing becomes a possible ground for unethical behaviors. These unethical behaviors can be presented in many forms such as keeping interviewees waiting unnecessarily, aggressive manner, arranging interview in such physical environment that make candidates feel uncomfortable, asking questions in an interrogation way rather than an interview. It is recognized that interview itself is stressful for some candidates, hence, there should be consideration about putting more pressure on candidates in such situations. In additions, ethical consideration should be balanced because how the candidate is treated impacts on their possibility of accepting a job offer (Rynes et al. 1980 cited in Fletcher 1992). Besides that, Fletcher suggests employers should reveal the judgments about candidates to them before taking the final decision, this is not further checked but can be the enhancement of the equity and fairness of the all-too-fallible interview.

Legal issues

Schmit and Ryan (2013) found that although the use of personality testing in employee selection has not faced intense legal inquiry, there are certain issues that the practitioner should consider before using these tools. Different countries and regions might have different legislation about the term and conditions of employment. These legal frameworks determine the rules of games and practitioners must understand these rules before any engagement to avoid failures (Pincus & belohlav, 1996). Thus, Legal issues with the use of personality tests in selection should be discussed in a specific country and region context. Assessment must be under legal requirements (Arthur et al., 2001). There are some unresolved legal issues regarding the use of personality assessment in selection.

There may be legal implications with rejecting high score candidates as "fakers" which seem to be unusual for most people, especially when the recruiter applies a top-down selection model or it may be a contradiction between regulation and practice or it can be a conflict between legislation

and sciences. Arthur and colleagues take some examples from the USA legal context. In the title I of the Civil Rights Act (CRA) 1991 in the USA, especially Section 106 states an unlawful practice for employers (Arthur et al., 2001):

“In connection with the selection or referral of applicants or candidates for employment or promotion to adjust the scores of, use different cutoffs for, or otherwise alter the results of employment-related tests on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” (Arthur et al., 2001, p.669)

Brown (1994) points out that this passage is “a prohibition of any form of score adjustment for any kind of employment-related test (including personality assessments and tests of physical abilities as well as cognitive abilities test)” (Brown, 1994, p.927) and therefore it is so difficult for an employer to comply and the employer under this Section “would be forced into quota hiring” (Sackett & Wilk, 1994, p.493). This also becomes a conflict between law and science that employers should take into consideration. While there is theoretically recognized that gender creates differences on some personality dimensions such as aggression, nurturance, agreeableness, masculinity-femininity. In this aspect, there is a different psychological meaning between groups. Therefore in the test developer’s perspective, the meaningful way to interpret their scores is to put them in their gender group context. If the test developers simply aggregate male and female normative data into sex-neutral norms as an address to meet legal requirements, it faces the scientific aspect of personality measurements. Or in some case of personality test which reveals test taker’s thoughts and feelings, it faces the issues of the privacy rights of individuals. Because its problems come from the nature of personality tests and current legislation, it is difficult for practitioners to find a perfect solution. However, it requires practitioners to understand and to be careful considers the pros and cons of a measure before choosing any personality assessment instrument.

Personality assessment across cultures

Personality assessment is established and used in selection procedures in many Western countries (Furnham, 2008) but it does have issues when people apply across cultures (Fruyt and Wille, 2013).

The topic of personality assessment across cultures has increasingly received attention because of issues related to the cultural bias inherent in the use of many personality assessment instruments (Dana, 1993). It is widely recognized that there are two main assumptions of personality traits: traits are maintained over time and individuals’ behaviors are directly influenced by traits (Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2003). Therefore, traits are used as an explanation for individuals’ behavior consistency over situations (Gatewood, Feild & Barrick, 2011). However, researchers have pointed out that the personalities of individuals were shaped by the cultural

milieu in which they were socialized. They were products of their cultures as an artifact because the personalities reflected the world view, values, ethos, and also the basis assumption of their cultures. With this framework, any personality assessments across cultures should consider these differences. Research shows that mean-level difference in personality is in different countries (Heller et al. 2007). Therefore, it would be inappropriate for personality assessment instruments to transpose across cultures without a full understanding of its nature and its measurements strategies (Marsella & Leong 1995). General issues and sources of error encountered in cross-cultural adaptation of psychological tests are culture and language difference, technical and methodological problems, interpretation of test results (Spielberger 2006). Dana (1993) suggests careful consideration of conceptual, linguistic, scale, normative equivalency of the assessment instruments is essential before conducting personality assessment across cultural boundaries. For example, research with 2671 Chinese participants by Wang, Cui & Zhou (2005) found that the Big Five personality structure of Western does not reflect the personality of Chinese people. There is another seven-factor structure which is recently emerged to present Chinese personality. A strategy based on cross-cultural approach was adopted to analyze these findings. Results showed that the Western personality questionnaires could not accurately measure the Chinese personality. Interestingly, five years later, with a smaller number of participants, Yang (2010) conducted empirical research on using of NEO personality inventory in China and found that personality structures of Chinese compared to American participants were the same on the whole. The relationship between personality and culture in the current study was closely correlated, despite there were some differences in the NEO-PI-R score. When the researcher compared the NEO-PI-R score of Chinese participants to the norm of Americans, there were some substantial differences in the mean scores between the two groups for the neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion and conscientiousness dimensions. This research concluded that the Five-Factor model dimensions of personality are suit for using in China, although there still needs further revision to be used. Obviously, the research with large sample size and have more representatives from different sub-culture groups as the first one is more generalized but differences between them still raise the question for practitioners, especially expatriates who do not well understand the root of these cultural differences

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3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method is chosen to address the research questions because it helps to give an in-depth understanding of the studied phenomenon. Empirical evidence for this study was obtained by semi-structured interviews with 17 people. This research found participants through snowball sampling technique and yet has some snowball technique limitations.

Participants are master students in one University in Hanoi and their friends who are willing to participate in this study. Two categories of people were selected for interviews: (1) Interviewers, (2) Interviewees (of human resource selection interviews). Participants for this study were coding as number (No) from 1 to 17 in Table 1.

Participants for this study were asked for main information:

- (1) How is personality assessment conducted in Vietnam?
- (1) What are the problematic issues in personality tests?
- (2) Does it matter?
- (3) Can anything be done to detect it?

The structural profile of participants are summarized below:

Table 1: The structural profile of participants

No	Category		Years of work experience (Up to the time of the interview)	Industry	Used PT	Testing PT with other types of test
1	HR manager	*	10	Information technology		Interview questions
2	HR manager	*	20	Printing		Interview questions
3	HR staff	*	5	Printing		Interview questions
4	HR staff	*	3	Banking	Buy home made PT	
5	Member of Director Board	*	18	Petroleum		Interview questions, observation
6	Middle Manager	*	14	Petroleum		Interview questions, observation
7	Middle Manager	*	10	Construction		Interview questions
8	First line manager	*	3	Construction		Interview questions
9	First line manager	*	1	Education		Interview questions
10	IT staff	**	2	Multi-industry	PT	
11	IT staff	**	1	Multi-industry	PT	
12	Administrative assistant	**	3	Multi-industry	PT	
13	Health Officer	**	5	Multi-industry	PT	
14	Accountant	**	5	Banking		Interview questions
15	Quality	**	3	Printing		Interview

	control staff					questions
16	Archivis-t	**	1	Printing		Interview questions
17	Administrative staff	**	3	Healthcare		Interview questions, Critical incident

Notes:

(*): Interviewer

(**): Interviewee

(PT): Personality Test

Data was collected in 2020-2021. Semi-structured Interviews were conducted via video call or in-person and lasted from 15 to 50 minutes. The provided information in the interview was cross-checked after each interview.

This study used an interpretive approach to analyze data, treating answers from interviewees as describing their reality and experience. Clustering, pattern-matching, and critical discourse analysis were used as primary techniques to analyze data. Themes derived from reviewing existing literature are used as patterns to test the phenomenon in Vietnam.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Faking issues

Vietnamese recruiters really care about faking issues in selection and always try to detect lying. However, they pointed that there are some harmful lies and also some harmless lies. Participant Number 9 asserted that:

The severity of the lie depends on the actual situation. It will be very serious if a person is fired from his previous company because of causing a serious conflict at the company (even fired for dishonesty in finances), but hides this truth. If so, when being hired, it is very likely that this person might cause a similar situation. (Participant No. 9)

In a different setting, another participant said:

It is okay if the candidate doesn't want to disclose something for an acceptable reason, such as personal life. (Participant No. 2)

For interviewees, the degree of fakeness varies widely. Some interviewees said that they do not lie in PT because:

I answer honestly, because similar to many people, I am proud of my personality. (Participant No. 10)

Another participant added:

I do tell the truth because I think it is easier to give the truth than telling lie. I just graduated from university. I do not have much working experience and the ability to fake. (Participant No. 11)

One phenomenon that can be seen among candidates conducted faking answers is that they give the fake to impress interviewers and increase the chance to be hired and that they normally create fake information from a certain fact. Interviewers do not lie completely. They do not lie with verifiable information. They tend to overstate or exaggerate themselves based on what they think can be explained. Recognizing the similarity between the participants' responses, this study examined further reasons and found that there is a relationship between education and faking behavior. All participants have at least a bachelor's degree. They learned interview skills in university. They are aware of the risks of lying to employers. For the companies that do not buy commercial personality test (PT), the job candidate's personality is assessed by the knowledge and experience of the interviewer. Some interviewers admit that sometimes they are confused when it comes to identifying some strange candidates or detect faking. In this case, they use their feelings to judge/evaluate job candidates, and thus, they are not so confident in their judgment.

These findings suggest hiring managers and human resource specialist to choose an appropriate personality assessment. There are many personality assessment instruments being sold to organizations for use in personnel selection, these devices are "quite costly, but useless" (Gatewood, Feild & Barrick 2011, p.525) and an effective measure is the one that must be predictive validity, chosen on job based analysis and work-related outcome measure. Practitioners should only choose the one which are enough developmental information to measure defined personality trait (Gatewood, Feild & Barrick 2011). Generally speaking, personality assessment should be done by professional in the field with appropriate training, should be specific related job and context and do not use "cookbook approach" (Arthur et al., 2001, p. 672) in any personality assessment.

Personality assessment in contexts

The majority of studied companies agreed that understanding job candidates' personalities is very important in the selection process. Participants stated that using contextual personality tests is very critical to select the right candidates. For example, consistent with finding from Gatewood et al. (2011), conscientiousness is the most personality trait that is frequently evaluated in an interview. Interviewers all agree that they seek job candidates who are hard-working and having commitment. Interviewers want to know if candidates work hard, are well-organized, responsible, and punctual (well-disciplined). Notwithstanding, assessment for other traits is conducted with requirements of specific jobs. For example: Archivists know confidential information of the company, so they should not be curiosity, nosy, gossipy...(Participant No. 2), Team leaders need to be creative, united, tolerance...(Participant No. 5), IT people need to be persistent (Participant No. 10).

This finding support the need of using appropriate personality assessment. From previous discussion, there is essential to consider specific context and job in choosing the appropriate instrument. Considering the context and specific job performance can narrow down the traits that can predict job performance. A job analysis. Then measure device is chosen. For example, if job analysis find that team work is important to job performance, then extroversion dimensions is needed to be measured (Barrick et al. 1998).

Legal issues

There are no detailed laws and/or Legislation on personality assessment. Thus, legal compliance during personality assessment is a new topic in Vietnam. In addition, the regulations on providing information for both employers and employees before and during the recruitment process are not clear. Therefore, it is very difficult to apply.

On the one hand, Participant No. 2 stated:

Assessing personality to understand the candidate's ability to work is very meaningful in recruitment (...) The labor law does not specify this content. Companies do not know how to handle if candidates provide fake information [on personality assessment] leading to serious loss to the business, but only can fire the just hired person. (Participant No. 2)

On the other hand, candidates (of job positions) in this study added that they did not have a habit of examining the legal regulations on recruitment methods and did not know any regulations related to personality assessment.

It seems to be hard to resolve issues related to a conflict between best practices and the legislation because organization must comply with legislation. In fact, there are always some potential gaps between Law and practice due to legislative loopholes, unintended effects of legislation, failures of accountability, lack of information about the law, inadequate regulation in a post-technological global world leads to the need for law revision (Ellis 2009) and thus there is a tendency for law revision. As a consequence, practitioners must ensure they update their understanding of legislation in the field.

Ethical issues

Respondents said that it is difficult to explain ethical issues in recruitment. The line between right and wrong is not clear. Participant No. 2 explained:

Some things that are ethical for candidates are not ethical for the business... thus, in some circumstances, we do some things that others consider unethical, but there is no other way. (Participant No.2)

Besides, the term “ethical behaviors” might have different meanings in different societies. Some behaviors are considered unethical in Western countries,

e.g. disclosure of personal information such as marital status, medical condition, social relationship are consider normal in Vietnam.

For job candidates, unethical example they often face in personality assessment are regional discrimination and favoritism. One candidate commented:

I do not dare to speak with a local accent because people often think badly of my province [...] so I speak Hanoi accent. (Participant No. 17)

Although further research is needed to understand ethical issues in selection interviews, especially to reflect the view of participants, interviewers, and interviewees (Fletcher 1992), a clear guideline about ethical behavior in job interviews should be developed. It can help both interviewers and interviewees to have appropriate behaviors. Interviewees may feel being respected and be more comfortable during the interview. Interviewers are more confident to perform their tasks.

Personality assessment across cultures

Interviewers assume that there are some levels of differences in personality traits of people who come from different regions and cultures. Participant No. 2 stated:

Vietnam is a multicultural country with 54 ethnic groups....Failure to understand regional characteristics may somehow cause problems in the workplace. (Participant No. 2)

Thus, employers should use PT with consideration of the specific socio-cultural factors of interviewees.

This finding gives an implication for staffing in cross-culture context. Taking cross-culture approach to understanding traits is important for personality assessment across cultures. Specific personality tests should be developed with thoroughly evaluating traits in specific cultural groups.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the most concerning issues among studied companies are faking and personality assessment in contexts. Legal compliance and ethical behaviors during personality assessment are new topics in Vietnam. Personality across cultures start having some levels of attention. Most studied Vietnam companies do not buy commercial personality test. They use/order home-made personality test or using different forms of interview to test the candidate's personality. Results also reconfirm that personality assessment is complex and required fully understanding and careful consideration of what effect their validity of measure as a job performance predictor. This study has some limitations of qualitative research and snowball technique. Findings of the study also highlights some implications for hiring managers.

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