*CHAPTER 7*

*Aligning Selection Strategies*

## Contents

Quiz 7.1 – Assessing workplace beliefs about selection tests 1

Quiz 7.2: Defining the culture where you best fit 2

Suggested answers to quiz exercises 3

References 5

# Quiz 7.1 – Assessing workplace beliefs about selection tests

Since HR professionals are directly responsible for disseminating knowledge about the usefulness of selection criteria and tools, their beliefs and perceptions are important. Please complete the short survey below and compare your answers with survey results. Some of the results come from a survey of 959 HR professionals from the Society of Human Resource Management., [[1]](#endnote-1) Before reviewing this research, answer the questions below.

What are your beliefs about the following selection tools? In your view, rate the following questions in terms of the effectiveness of the tool in predicting job performance. Answer True or False to each of the following statements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_"Conscientiousness", a personality measure, is a better predictor of performance than intelligence.

2. \_\_\_\_\_Organizations that screen employees on the basis of values have higher performance than those who screen for intelligence.

3.\_\_\_\_\_Integrity tests try to predict whether someone will steal, be absent, or otherwise take advantage of an employer. They don't work because people don't tell the truth when they fill them out.

4.\_\_\_\_\_Integrity tests are not well liked and will eliminate a larger portion of the population (especially minorities) who see them as inappropriate.

5.\_\_\_\_\_Organizations can use accurately personality and integrity tests to screen out interpersonal and organizational deviance.

Often, recruitment and selection tests can be prone to fads or mistaken impressions of their usefulness and there is a wide gap between what is believed to be true in selection and what is actually practised.[[2]](#endnote-2) When choosing selection tests it is important to recognize the recent research so that we can evaluate whether some of the assumptions and beliefs that we hold about different selection tools are true.

# Quiz 7.2: Defining the culture where you best fit

In the first column rank order the culture values you feel comfortable with, with 1 being most important and 8 being least important. In the second column think of the values of the people you work with (or have worked with) in an organization or group. Place a (+) in the second column if your values "fit" with the top 4 values you identified and a (-) if you feel your values do not fit.

 Your Organization's

 Values Values

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Concern for Detail:* A culture which is scientific in nature, which encourages analytical thinking, precision, and attention to detail.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Concern for Decisiveness.* A culture where there are clear decision boundaries, low conflict, fairness, predictability, and stability.

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Need for Innovation and risk-taking:* An organization which is innovative, experimenting, quick to take advantages of opportunities and risking. This culture does not place as high a value on stability, organization, rules, carefulness or security.

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Desire for collaboration and team relationships:* A collaborative, interpersonal environment which is people oriented, team oriented and where people share information freely. This is an atmosphere which places a lower value on individual autonomy.

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Support and tolerance*. A culture of tolerance and support, which shares information and praises people for good performance. This is a non-competitive culture.

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Focus on performance in relation to customer outcomes:* An organization which is achievement oriented, demanding, and which places value on achieving customer related results. It is a culture where there are high expectations for performance and for the achievement of results which respond to customer needs.

7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Focus on performance in relation to individual achievement and distinctiveness:* A competitive and aggressive culture where individual achievement and performance is important and which responds to opportunities.

8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *Emphasis on rewards*. An environment which is professional in nature, which encourages professional growth, fitting in, and high pay based on professional norms for performance.

# Suggested answers to quiz exercises

## Quiz 7.1: What are your beliefs about the best selection tests?

***1. False. Conscientiousness is not a better predictor than intelligence****.*  In a survey of 959 HR professionals, 72 percent of participants indicated the opposite – that conscientiousness was a better predictor than intelligence. In fact, there is a great deal of research to illustrate the opposite.[[3]](#endnote-3) General Mental Ability (GMA) explains about 25% of the variance in employee performance and conscientiousness explains 9%.[[4]](#endnote-4) GMA is even more relevant for more complex jobs (professional and managerial) but lower for less complex, semi-skilled jobs. Both are good predictors of performance, but intelligence is slightly more relevant.

***2. False: Values may not be a better predictor than intelligence****.* A majority of respondents (57%) believe that values are a better predictor of performance than intelligence. However, there is little evidence to link values to improved performance. Value-fit is a good predictor of satisfaction and retention. It is important to define which values are important to an organization, as certain values fit better with certain organizations. HR professionals can use behavioural description interview questions and accomplishment records to test if people actually live those values they define as important. [[5]](#endnote-5)

***3. True: Integrity tests are useful****.* A majority of those surveyed felt that integrity tests did not work because people could easily lie when completing them. While applicants can and do distort their answers on integrity tests and résumés, these selection devices are still effective predictors of performance.[[6]](#endnote-6) One possible reason that they are still useful, in spite of the distortions, is that most people distort their answers to the same degree. As a result, the ‘faking’ factor balances out in relationship to performance. Given these limitations, integrity tests and resumes can still be useful, especially when combined with other tests and selection tools. [[7]](#endnote-7)

***4. False: Integrity tests favour certain groups over others and might discriminate against minorities.*** This is not true, despite the fact that nearly 70% of the respondents agreed with this statement. [[8]](#endnote-8) In fact, the difference in integrity tests across different ethnic and racial groups is small, although gender differences are more significant.[[9]](#endnote-9) And, while they are not the most popular tests, they are equally unpopular among all groups.[[10]](#endnote-10)

***5. Possibly: We might be able to screen out people who might be interpersonally and organizationally deviant****.* Recently the workplace deviance literature has made a distinction between interpersonal deviance (e.g., violence, gossip, theft from co-workers) and organizational deviance (e.g. intentionally working slowly, damaging organizational property, sharing confidential organizational information). In a meta-analysis of 37 different samples, researchers found a relationship between interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance. They also found strong differential relationships with key personality attributes such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and organizational citizenship behaviour.[[11]](#endnote-11) In addition, there was no relationship to most demographic variables. This new research might have important implications in screening applicants.

**Conclusion**

This quiz encourages you to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of tests.

1. What are some of the advantages of these and other tests in selection? Which would you use and why?
2. What are the disadvantages?

In moving forward, it might be fruitful to respect the triangulation principles and use more than one source of evidence. Also, while it is possibly to draw correlations between various dimensions when we look at these dimensions in a research study which observes scientific conventions, applicants might respond differently in tests taken during a selection process where they are seeking a job. Testing is still a controversial area and due diligence is important. As with most measurements, there is the possibility of error and there are suspicions that respondents might fake the results.

## Quiz 7.2- Defining the culture where you best fit

The traditional foundation for selection in Western organizations is person-job fit, or finding the applicants who have the skills necessary for the job. Based on the demands of the job and the tasks needed, we select people who have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities. I

In implementing ideas of person-culture fit, we are trying to fit the person to the culture.

To obtain profiles of organizations, researchers asked key informants to sort 54 characteristics of their organizational culture. Eight organizational profiles were developed describing different values: (i) attention to detail (a scientific or research organizations), (ii) Stability (career organizations), (iii) innovation (entrepreneurial ventures), (iv) collaboration and team orientation (some police, fire, teaching and nursing jobs), (v) respect for people, (vi) orientation for outcomes and results (with direct client relations), (vii) aggressiveness and competitiveness (commissioned sales organization), (viii) supportiveness (some professional groups). [[12]](#endnote-12)

The instrument represented by quiz 7.2 is a general summary of the values of each profile and should only be thought of as an anecdotal summary to describe different cultures.

# References

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