Thomas

Personal Profile Analysis

A COMMENTARY ON ITS HISTORY AND VALIDATION

The Marston Theory

The Personal Profile Analysis (PPA) had its original impetus from the writings of Marston (1928, 1931) who postulated a theory of human behaviour as a function of two bipolar dimensions, one external and the other internal:

The External environment, which can be described in terms of a continuum with opposing poles, Antagonistic and Favourable. The individual's internal reaction which can be described along a continuum from opposing poles, Activity to Passivity.

These two dimensions provided a matrix from which the individual's typical pattern of interaction could be described through four characteristics:

DOMINANCE – active positive movement in an antagonistic environment.

INDUCEMENT – active positive movement in a favourable environment.

SUBMISSION – passive agreeableness in a favourable environment

COMPLIANCE – cautious tentative response to an antagonistic environment, designed to reduce the degree of antagonism.

It is assumed that most people are capable of showing all four of these patterns at different times. however it is also assumed that an individual develops, through learning and reinforcement, a style of life which places particular emphasis on certain aspects of behaviour and less on others. Further research by others in the 1950s confirmed this proposal that behaviour can be measured along the two axes/four dimensions as suggested by Marston. These include Gordon (1953), Denton (1954), LaForge (1955), Suczek (1955) and Clarke (1956).

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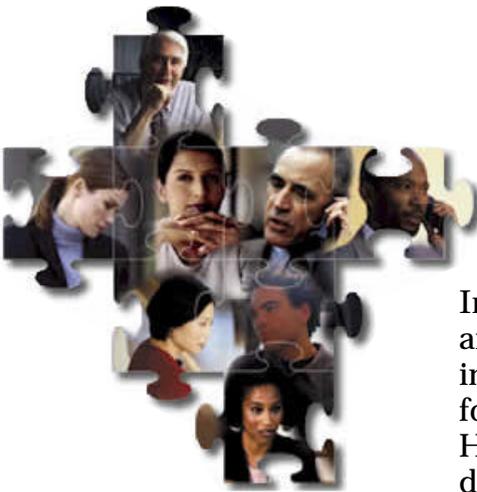
Thomas Hendrickson

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Thomas Hendrickson of T M Hendrickson and Associates, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA developed Marston's insights further to produce the Personal Profile Analysis self report system for the work place. The Personal Profile Analysis system as conceived by Hendrickson is a forced choice IPSATIVE instrument. This means it describes the individual in a self referential way and is regarded as providing information of importance and value to employers making personnel decisions.

The Personal Profile Analysis system attempts to determine whether individuals see themselves as characteristically seeking out and/or reacting to work place situations that they perceive as friendly or challenging and to reveal if the response pattern is one of activity or passivity. The Personal Profile is a self administered forced choice adjective checklist consisting of 24 tetrads of descriptive words from each of which applicants are asked to select which they believe describes them most (M) and which least (L).

The words chosen in the first experiments were based on Marston's definitive work. As far as possible the words selected had "face validity" with Marston's model and each tetrad related to one of the four dimensions - Dominance, Inducement, Submission and Compliance.

Original construction methodology

The first empirical trials were conducted by Hendrickson on a small group of 115 people (67 males / 48 females) in 1958 and the occupational distribution was: 46 college students, 17 teachers, 27 supervisors, 16 other professionals, 13 office workers, 6 miscellaneous.

Frequency distributions of responses were made and words were recombined in tetrads such that each tetrad contained a word relating to each dimension. Moreover, attempts were made to combine words of relatively equal response strength in order to reduce the effects of social desirability in response patterns.

High response words were grouped together with other high response words, low response words with other low response words. 76 of the original 96 words were absorbed in this manner and five extra tetrads were constructed to bring the total once more to twenty four. Of the words retained 39% are the same as in Marston.

The revised form was administered to a larger and more representative sample group of 500 (388 male/112 female) divided between the following occupations groups: 212 managers, 128 professionals, 62 clerical, 38 salespeople, 34 machine operators, 36 miscellaneous.
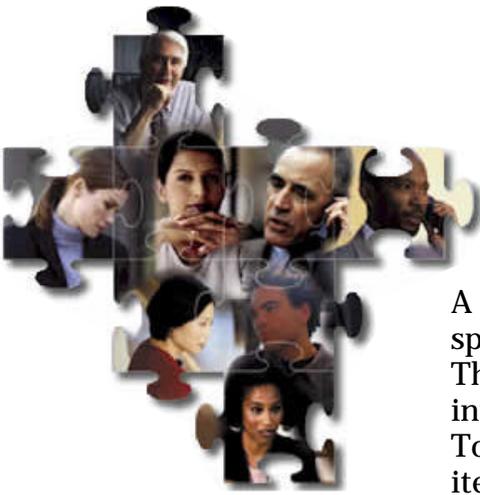
A random sample of 100 was drawn from this group to determine split half reliability and intercorrelation among the four factors. The results indicated that the Personal Profile had a satisfactory internal consistency when assessed in this way. To eliminate non discriminating items from the scoring key, an item analysis was initiated. A random sample of 185 (130 male/55 female) was drawn from a population of 1200 with an occupation distribution of 89 managers, 35 technicians, 26 office workers, 12 engineers,12 sales people, 6 staff and 5 miscellaneous.

The internal consistency was confirmed and the scoring key adjusted. At this stage, the Marston dimension of **SUBMISSION** was changed to **STEADINESS** and the Marston dimension of INDUCEMENT changed to **INFLUENCE.** A random sample of 100 (75 male/25 female) was selected to test the new scoring key and the results correlated against the original trials.

To develop and add to the reliability, test/retest trials were conducted on a sample of 72 (47 male/25 female) with the new scoring keys.

This research in the early 1960s and the final version formed part of an extensive paper on the question of behaviour in the work place. This paper was submitted to the American Psychological Society both in terms of the results the PPA achieved and the methodology of the research.

THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF PPA/HJA IS TO BE A STRUCTURED GUIDE TO AN INTERVIEW - FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE - AND BRINGS TO MIND RELEVANT AND INCISIVE QUESTIONS THAT FOCUS ON THE DEMANDS OF THE JOB ROLE.

Introduction to the UK

The PPA questionnaire as derived by Hendrickson, was introduced into the UK in 1981 following adjustments to take into account different perceptions between US and UK uses of the English language. The revised PPA questionnaire remained unchanged until 1997 when a revision was completed to allow for current attitudes to equal opportunities and gender neutrality. Going into the millennium Thomas has 50 language versions of the PPA questionnaire available and Thomas International operates in a total of 50 countries.
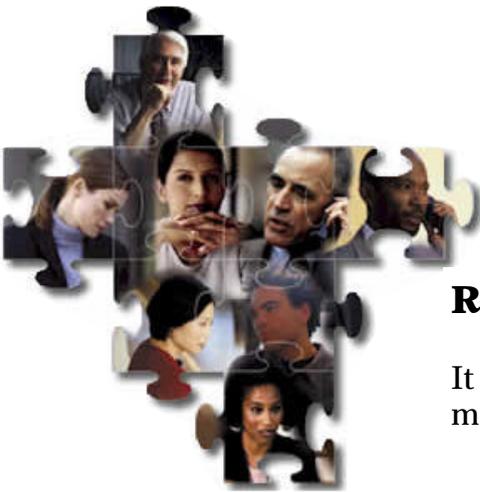
RELIABILITY, VALIDITY and UTILITY

It is generally accepted that efficacy of tests or assessments is best measured by studying three factors, Reliability, Validity and Utility.

RELIABILITY

A test is said to be reliable if it provides the same score for each subject on different occasions. Thomas International recommends that PPA be given at intervals of no less than 3 months.

The minimum satisfying figure for test reliability is 0.7 (Kline). High test/retest reliability has been shown by PPA on retesting and UK data is regularly reviewed.

As an example, a test/retest reliability analysis involved 72 people, (47 male, 25 female), all employed in executive or professional positions. Retest intervals ranged from 3-12 months with a mean of 6 months. The test/retest reliability co-efficients of the PPA dimensions of DISC were as follows:

	R
D	0.84
I	0.70
S	0.77
C	0.87

These results suggest PPA is a reliable measure having stability over time.

PREDICTIVE VALIDITY

Early data suggested that PPA and its interpretations from the DISC factors achieved a predictive validity of 85+ %. More recent research by Professor Sidney Irvine focussed on particular job roles for specific clients and the results were published in the journal "Current Psychology" (Irvine, Mettam & Syrad, 1994).

The research shows that PPA gives good predictive validity when objective and verifiable criteria are used. It shows clearly distinguishable profiles for different job types and also differences within profiles for successes and failures in these jobs. Evidence for the validity of profile types as persistent and recognisable personal workstyles is due to be published in the near future by Professor Sidney Irvine.
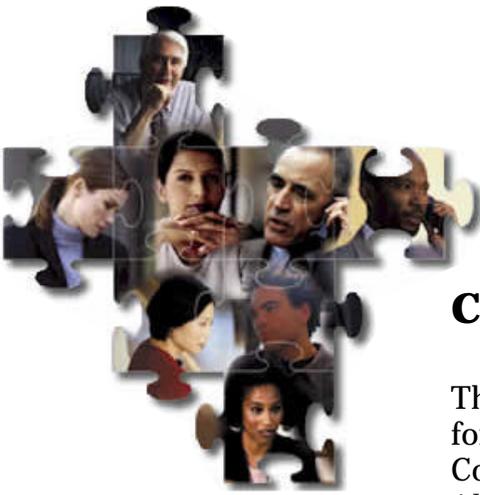
Conclusion

Thomas International fully adheres to the guidelines published for non psychologists by the British Psychological Society and the Code of Practice published by the Institute of Personal Development. All instruments distributed by Thomas International Management Systems (UK) Ltd are recommended for use only by trained clients. The supporting software programmes are "expert" systems and are constantly up-graded, as are refresher training workshops for trained practitioners in Thomas Systems.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING

Kline. P: Personality: measurement and theory. Hutchinson, London (1983)

Irvine.S.H. Personal Profile Analysis – A Contemporary Frame of Reference for Research and Development (1988)
Irvine.S.H., Mettam.D., Syrad.T.,
Valid and More Valid? Keys to Understanding Personal Appraisal Practices at Work – Current Psychology, Spring 1994, Vol 13.

Thomas International: PPA Technical Manual 1986

THOMAS INTERNATIONAL FULLY ADHERES TO THE GUIDELINES PUBLISHED FOR NON-PSYCHOLOGISTS BY THE BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THE CODE OF PRACTICE PUBLISHED BY THE INSTITUTE OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.

SPECIAL THANKS TO TONY CHAPMAN MA.,Dip.M.
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Test Description:

Test Name:	Personal Profile Analysis
Local test distributor / publisher:	Thomas International Ltd
Date of Current Review:	2003
Date of Publication of Current Review/Edition:	1998
Constructs Measured:	Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance
Administration Mode:	Administration is by means of a self-administered booklet or, alternatively, via computer, using Thomas International Human Resources Software.
Response Mode:	Manual operations Paper and pencil Computerised

Instrument Evaluation:

Characteristics	Evaluation
Quality of Documentation	★★★
Quality of Materials	★★★★
Norms and reference groups	N/A
Construct validity	★★★
Criterion-related validity	★★★★
Reliability-overall	★★★★
Number of Computer-Generated Reports	Not recorded