

The Psychometric Paradox

By Rima Al-Ibrahim-BMC International

Psychometric assessments are becoming a more common tool to support talent management, selection and organisational culture/environment fit. The assessment tools are utilised for a wide range of measurement purposes including selection, succession planning, coaching, and team development. Despite this, human capital and other professionals need to ensure they are choosing the right tests and the right norm groups, whilst administering and feeding-back the results in the right way to the right people otherwise the experience may be 'nice', or even counterproductive. →



“Choose profiling tools that are reliable and valid. They need to fit your needs and utilise the correct norm groups. And if they don’t? The results can be inaccurate and even counterproductive.”

Individual and team assessments are used to identify common group behaviours, demonstrate gaps in perception and provide opportunities to think more openly and work together in a manner that creates team alignment and increased effectiveness.

Most frequently, we use psychometrics with organisations working through human capital decisions, such as selection for hiring, promotions, and succession planning. We all know that poor selection decisions mean negative consequences such as high recruitment costs and poor hires who can cause work disruption, lost business, and hindrance of investor confidence.

The Centre for Creative Leadership (US) found that 40% of new hires fail within the first 18 months. Interviews alone do not provide an objective view of how an individual compares to others. What helps? Psychometrics. Psychometrics are being used increasingly in the GCC, with steady growth over the past five years. Coupled with coaching, the development needs identified in psychometrics can then be activated through one-on-one executive or team coaching.

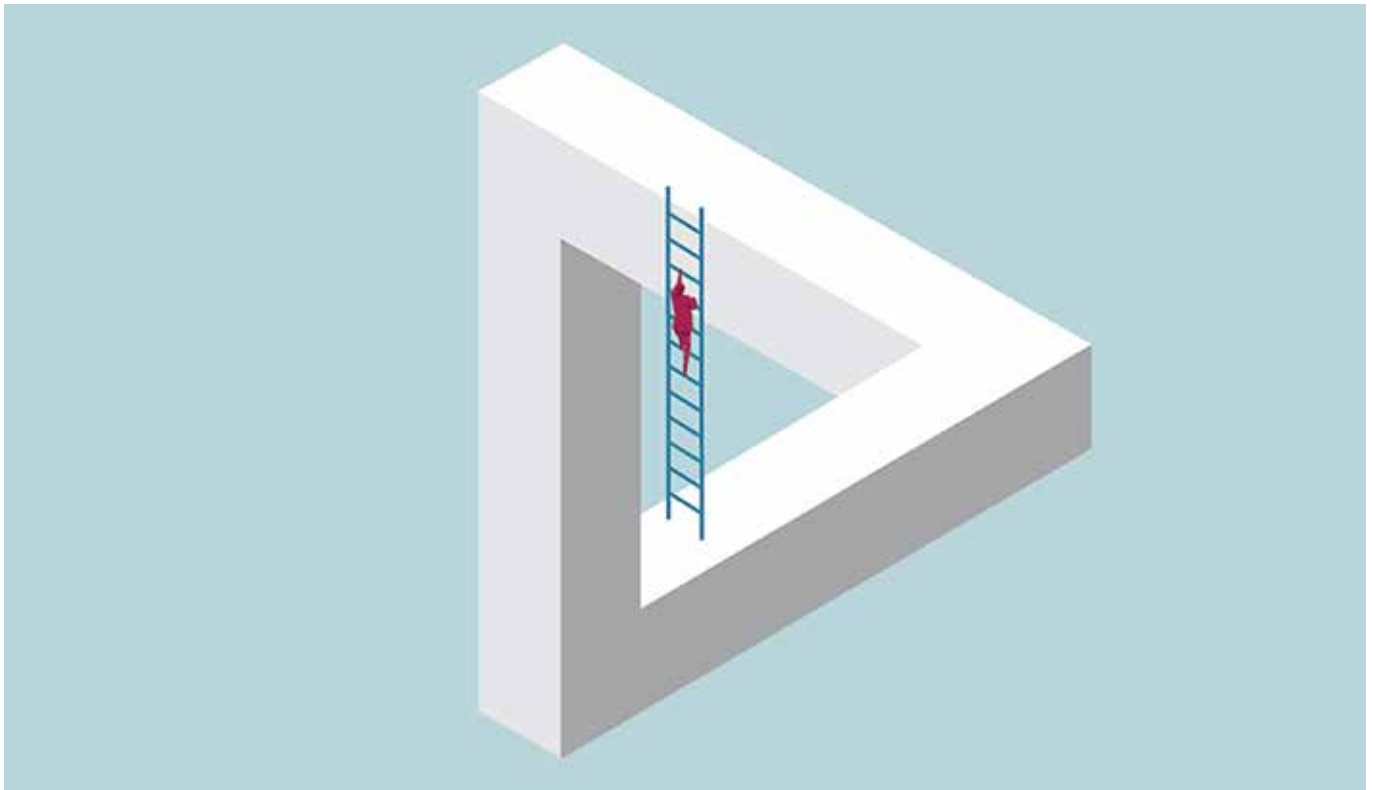
Psychometric assessments evaluate individuals based on certain criteria depending on the purpose for which the assessment is used.

Psychometric assessments provide a rigorous method to increase the likelihood of selecting the best fit for a position often in terms of skills, knowledge and behaviours.

For example, Newton Medical Center utilized psychometric testing as one data point in its selection decision for a new Director of Nursing and Operations. The selection process implemented tests specifically normed for selection purposes on an executive/professional population. These measures provided insights regarding each candidate’s readiness to assume the responsibilities and challenges specific to the Director of Nursing and Operations role based on the identified critical success factors.

Joseph A. DiPaolo, President of Newton Medical Center and Vice President of Atlantic Health System, noted that “...in today’s hyper-paced environment, developmental assessments and hiring decisions require new screening methods to ensure that all competencies are adequately evaluated. The use of psychometric assessment was instrumental in helping us make exceptional decisions.”





Below are types of assessments we used in business settings:

- ▶ **Cognitive**—Measures Capacity
- ▶ **Motivational**—Measures Purpose
- ▶ **Leadership Competencies (norm groups and/or 360)**—identifies leadership patterns and reveals the extent to which one’s leadership pattern is task or people-oriented
- ▶ **Personality**—measures personality patterns across four continuums
- ▶ **Behavioural**—Measures Actions
- ▶ **Emotional Intelligence**—Measures Emotional Ability.

While psychometric assessments can be a useful tool in organisational settings, it is important to exercise caution when choosing and implementing the tool. First and foremost, know your business needs.

If unclear about what specific variables you seek to measure, the results of the assessment will have no basis on which to be interpreted.

Once the objectives of the assessment are identified, choose the test that is designed for that particular purpose, which will accurately evaluate those variables. It is important to pick a psychometric test that has been empirically tested to ensure reliability and validity of its use, ideally utilising both normative and ipsitive measures. A poorly-constructed test or inaccurate norm group will provide insufficient results. We only work with tests that have approval from the British Psychological Society.

We use Saville Wave suite of diagnostics that include some of the latest profile on the market, such

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as the Leadership Impact Report for C-Suite Potential. Independent research shows Saville Waves as the most reliable and valid in independent studies.

Other useful points of reference:

- The most valid indicator of competency potential and cultural fit
- The only psychometric tool to identify work motives and talents
- Multiple language availability, including Arabic, encouraging standardised international assessment
- User and administrator friendly reporting

When properly executed and when professional feedback is given, psychometric testing can provide valuable information that can inform decisions and increase performance on an individual, team and organisational level. **BIG**



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